UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
10th meeting
held on
Thursday, 20 October 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/49/24 and Add.1, A/49/213, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/294, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/422-S/1994/1086, A/49/434, A/49/435, A/49/462 and Corr.1; A/C.3/49/4)

1. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) said his delegation wished to reaffirm, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, that the international community should work for both social progress and economic development, in order to fulfil human aspirations and ensure human dignity and security. Despite the social progress that had been achieved, recent changes had often had the most serious effect on the most vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, the elderly and children. In the context of the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, Japan had championed the causes of achieving social justice, meeting basic human needs, developing human resources and promoting human rights. He hoped the summit would produce a consensus on how to achieve those objectives and begin a constructive dialogue between developed and developing countries. It should also emphasize the importance of giving special attention to African countries, the least developed countries and countries in transition, as well as the importance and effectiveness of South-South cooperation among developing countries in the interest of sustainable social development.

2. Japan firmly believed that the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities was essential for the mobilization of human resources and the improved integration of socially marginalized groups. It therefore welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and hoped that a greater number of Member States would reaffirm their moral and political commitment to respecting those rules. At the national level, long-term programmes for the disabled, formulated in 1982 and retargeted in 1987, had been re-evaluated and revised in 1993 to meet changing needs in the areas of public awareness, education, employment, health, welfare, environment, sports and arts, and international cooperation. At the international level, his Government had contributed $100,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability earlier in 1994. During the current discussion on the draft declaration and programme of action in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development, Japan was campaigning, along with numerous States and non-governmental organizations, for awareness of the goals of full integration of persons with disabilities in social development, and equal opportunities.

3. Japanese society was ageing rapidly; the Japanese Government consequently attached particular importance to international efforts to create both a conceptual framework and practical guidelines, which would be helpful in addressing that challenge. He also welcomed the initiatives taken by the General Assembly to further the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing of 1982, as well as other aspects of the United Nations

programme on ageing such as the adoption of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, the global targets on ageing for the year 2001, and the Proclamation on Ageing, which would promote new opportunities for the elderly and foster recognition of the benefits that flowed to society from the ageing of the population. Japan encouraged the early commencement by the international community of preparations for the International Year of Older Persons in 1999.

4. Differentiated approaches should be devised to address the needs of socially vulnerable groups such as the disabled, the elderly and youth. In every instance, however, the emphasis should be on equal participation, improvement of human rights conditions, and empowerment. Recognizing that the year 1995 would mark the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, his Government was of the view that the anniversary and the World Youth Programme of Action to the Year 2000 and Beyond to be adopted on that occasion would provide a unique opportunity to rediscover the potential of youth in a proper political, economic and social environment. Countries should ensure that youth was fully integrated into development. His delegation wished to stress the importance of equal access to education and better employment opportunities for young people, in a spirit of gender equality and tolerance of diversity. Protecting youth from drugs, crime, hunger, malnutrition, disease and poverty should be a foremost goal for all countries; that was in the interest of the young and also of the societies in which they lived.

5. The World Summit for Social Development should be a forum for revitalizing the international community's discussion in the social field, for providing momentum to the formulation and implementation of national policies, plans and programmes, and for coordinating the efforts of all social entities in favour of sustainable social development.

6. Mrs. MASKEY (Nepal) said that, while social development was the primary responsibility of Governments, the international community also had an obligation to help with endeavours to alleviate poverty. It was regrettable that the peace dividend which had been hoped for with the end of the cold war, and the economic prosperity which was expected to go with it, had not materialized. She welcomed the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development and Fourth World Conference on Women, and hoped that they would help to alleviate the effects of poverty and give a new impetus to efforts to increase women's participation in development activities and the decision-making process. The identification of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration as core issues for the World Summit was especially welcome; poverty was still rampant in most developing countries, particularly in the least developed and land-locked States. The situation of developing countries, particularly African countries, should be given special attention by the international community. Human respect and dignity could be restored among the poor on the basis of the principles of the right to development and social justice. A people-centred approach to development needed to be promoted. In that respect, Governments, the United Nations system, the international community, private entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations and cooperatives should be mobilized. Above all, there should be an increased participation of women. The generation of employment opportunities was the most effective way to combat poverty, provided

that wage levels were sufficiently high. The Nepalese Government had set up a national committee to prepare for the World Summit, and was participating actively in the preparations for the Summit. Its efforts to combat poverty and encourage social development, which included the allocation of more than 20 per cent of its budget to the social development sector, were none the less hampered by illiteracy, ignorance and the caste system.

7. The International Year of Disabled Persons and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 37/52, had greatly contributed to devising the programmes to give disabled persons the same opportunities as other citizens. In Nepal, many of the disabilities were caused by lack of immunization for all, malnutrition, industrial accidents or natural disasters. To improve the conditions of the disabled, a national committee on disability had been set up. In each district, the Government had established a committee for special education, providing support to schools which educated persons with different types of disabilities. Many non-governmental organizations were supporting the Government's efforts. Great numbers of children in Nepal were still deprived of primary health care and basic education because they were obliged to work in order to help their parents or support their families. To alleviate that problem, the Government had made education free up to the beginning of secondary school, and enacted various regulations condemning the use of child labour and guaranteeing children's rights. The Nepalese Constitution of 1990 also guaranteed equal opportunities to all, irrespective of race, sex, language or religion. The Government had restored human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country, and was fully engaged in improving the living conditions of marginalized sections of society by providing services such as health and sanitation, safe drinking water, education and food security.

8. Miss REIMER (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Danish Youth Council and as youth representative on the Danish delegation to the General Assembly, noted that 1995 would be the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year. Those prospects, along with the World Summit for Social Development to take place in Copenhagen in March 1995, had aroused great expectations. Just as children hoped for presents on their birthday - although, sadly, many had nothing to look forward to but fear, insecurity and disappointment - she would express a few wishes in the name of all the children and youth of the world: that the 18 countries which had not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child should do so; that the system for monitoring the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be strengthened by empowering the Committee to receive and consider complaints and by mandating a special rapporteur to make inspections in the countries concerned; that the Copenhagen Summit should see a breakthrough for sustainable human development in the fight against poverty; and finally, that all Member States should decide to send youth representatives to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

9. Her delegation felt that the time had come to focus attention on children and young people, who were only asking for a fair start in life. It was possible to create a world in which children would not have to live in fear, in

which they would feel secure and could have faith in the future. Those, in fact, had been the intentions of the General Assembly when they had adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. She was very pleased to note that 166 countries had already ratified the Convention.

10. However, five years had elapsed since the adoption of the Convention and there were still indications of serious violations of children's rights. In addition, the Committee monitoring the implementation of the Convention was overloaded with work, because the very number of ratifications had resulted in a host of reports for consideration. The monitoring mechanism needed to be strengthened in order to give the Convention a chance to become the powerful instrument it was meant to be. She welcomed the recent decision by the States Parties to the Convention to increase the annual number of Committee meeting sessions from two to three. However, additional measures were needed. The Committee should be empowered to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups who claimed that their rights under the Convention had been violated. A similar system was in use, for instance, in connection with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Her delegation also suggested that the Commission on Human Rights should appoint a special rapporteur to supplement the Committee's work. The special rapporteur would monitor respect for the fundamental rights of children by making inspections in all countries, whether or not they were parties to the Convention and whether or not they had accepted the right of individuals to bring complaints.

11. Turning to the subject of poverty, she noted that poverty had many faces, from those who struggled for daily survival to those who found themselves out of work and unable to support themselves and their families. She stressed that every child had the right to adequate food, clean water, good housing, reliable health care and, last but not least, a basic education. That dream seemed unlikely to come true as long as everyday life for the people of the world was determined by policies narrowly focused on economic growth, trade and development assistance. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were continuing to assist Governments in implementing structural adjustment programmes; although they had recently agreed to take social consequences into account in their programmes, they need to intensify their efforts in that direction.

12. She recalled that in 1993, UNDP had declared that poverty had its greatest impact on children and was a denial of future generations and that in most developing countries, poverty was often caused less by a shortage of resources than by their uneven distribution. The obvious and difficult challenge was to redistribute the world's resources in an appropriate way, both within countries and between them. She was pleased that the United Nations had accepted the challenge by organizing the World Summit on Social Development.

13. Danish youth were very enthusiastic about those new prospects for sustainable human development. They would do everything they could to help realize them. Non-governmental youth organizations had already planned many

activities to take place along with the Summit. But that enthusiasm could easily turn to bitter disappointment, if Member States did not feel a responsibility to apply the new approach to the struggle against poverty. She hoped that the Summit in Copenhagen would mark the start of a new era, because poverty anywhere was a threat to prosperity everywhere.

14. Her delegation welcomed the proposed world youth programme of action to the year 2000 and beyond as an attempt to create a coherent youth policy within the United Nations system. Regrettably, children and young people were not participating enough in that process. In 1993, the youth representative from Denmark had asked for more youth representation at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Only three nations had heeded her appeal. The celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year and the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on youth issues would make sense only if young people chosen by young people were participating.

15. Ms. CHEN Wangxia (China) said that, although the end of the cold war had raised hopes for economic prosperity, the present era was beset by a host of social ills: poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, population explosion, refugees, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, crime and unfair treatment of segments of society such as women, children and the disabled. All countries were increasingly demanding that international cooperation should be strengthened in order to resolve those problems. Since the Charter had assigned to the United Nations the task of promoting economic and social development, it was expected that the Organization would focus its main efforts on developing countries, which encompassed the majority of the world's population. The differences among States, however, had resulted in the emergence of different social problems, which called for the adoption of different priorities, policies and measures. Therefore, in order to be effective and equitable, international cooperation should be applied on the basis of mutual respect and benefit, without politicizing the problems of economic and social development and without strings attached.

16. Her delegation was encouraged that the international community had been according greater importance to such problems, as demonstrated by the many international conferences devoted to them. She hoped that developed countries would make greater commitments in the field of social development and that the United Nations would do more in that area, particularly for third world countries.

17. She welcomed the upcoming World Summit for Social Development as a significant event in that field. The Chinese Government had actively participated in the preparations and would contribute wholeheartedly. Her delegation felt that addressing the three core issues of the Summit would have a decisive impact on sustainable development. The most important of the three, the alleviation and reduction of poverty, was the key to enabling human beings to enjoy the means of subsistence and the benefits of development. While advocating that different countries should have the right to choose different development strategies, her delegation emphasized the need to strengthen international cooperation and to enhance the role of the United Nations. It

called upon the international community to provide more financial and technical assistance to developing countries.

18. On the occasion of the World Summit, China had organized a series of important events. It had held a national working conference on social development and formulated an outline programme for national development for the period 1996-2010. It had also organized the first large-scale exhibition on social development achievements from 24 to 29 September 1994, involving 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities and over 20 ministries of the central Government. It held an international symposium on social development in Beijing from 7 to 9 October 1994, which had considered issues such as the eradication of poverty, the role of Governments, and norms and methods for measuring social development. It had produced and submitted to the United Nations a national report on China's social development. Furthermore, the Chinese preparatory committee for the World Summit had done extensive publicity work in China to familiarize people with the Summit and to encourage them to participate actively in the work of social development.

19. With respect to youth, the Chinese delegation recalled that since the proclamation of International Youth Year in 1985 the international community and individual countries had, under the themes "participation, development and peace", drawn up comparable policies and plans for youth and initiated various activities which had produced results. The Chinese delegation had studied the Secretary-General's report (A/49/434). It believed that the draft world youth programme of action was an important measure for promoting work in that field. The draft world youth programme was very significant as it had a bearing on several billion young people in the world and on their future. The Programme should clearly point out that the new post-cold-war situation had created hopes as well as new problems for young people. It should carry out in-depth analysis of the various problems and ills of present-day societies and the way they affected the youth of all countries and, in particular, the serious consequences they had entailed for developing countries. It should draw on the results of recent international conferences in order to propose guidelines and recommendations that were factual, reflective of the specific needs of youth and practical.

20. For the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, China had established a coordination group for celebration activities. The group had already drafted programmes, including extensive international exchanges, which would enable young people to play a greater role in solving contemporary problems and to be prepared to face the difficult tasks of the next century.

21. With respect to the disabled, in order to achieve the goal of participation by all in society by the year 2000, it was imperative that the international community should reach consensus on the need for full participation by the disabled in society. The Chinese delegation was happy to note that several recent important international conferences had all incorporated into their agenda the realization of the equal rights of disabled persons and their full participation and had proposed measures and recommendations in their programmes of action. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system, regional

commissions and organizations also encouraged and supported the participation of disabled persons in their respective programmes.

22. In that connection, she mentioned the sixth Olympiad for Disabled Persons of the Far East and South Pacific Regions, which had been held in Beijing in early September 1994. Over 2,000 athletes, coaches and officials and over 1,300 journalirts from 42 countries and regions had attended the event. Over 30,000 Chinese volunteers had contributed to an event which had no precedent in the history of the Olympic Games in terms of scale and number of participants. Under the slogan "Equality, participation, friendship and progress", the games had allowed disabled people to show their will, their power and their strength and by so doing to demonstrate forcefully the significance of the participation of disabled persons in society. The Chinese Government and people would continue to make contributions to the cause of the disabled persons of the world.

23. Mr. PALLAIS ARANA (Nicaragua), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, noted that the 1990s had been a turning-point in the history of Central America. Its Governments, conscious of the poverty rife in the region and the danger to the future which it represented, had committed themselves to transforming Central America into a region of peace, liberty, democracy and sustainable development.

24. To that end, they had adopted two great principles - human development and Central American solidarity - as pillars of a policy of economic growth with social equity. The main strategies of the policy must be food and nutrition security and transformation of the system of production. The social and economic policies to be elaborated around those strategies would contribute to the development of production and the broadening of the internal market and opportunities for employment, within a legal framework which would guarantee respect for human rights and eliminate the structural and collateral factors which lay at the root of violence. Just as the region had found the road to peace, it should also demonstrate its creativity in finding a way towards sustainable growth, by establishing a regional platform that would clearly define the type of society to which it aspired and that would serve as a foundation for coordination, harmonization of efforts and harnessing of resources.

25. As the Governments of the region had stated it was necessary to adopt new and integrated policies in order to satisfy the population's basic needs in the short term and to create conditions which would allow families and communities to participate in the development process. One way of doing that would be to provide training programmes. The Governments of the region wished to present to their people, to friendly Governments and to cooperating and international agencies a strategy, a platform and a goal, as part of a new process for national and regional development. That process rested on five essential points - equity, stability, self-sufficiency, productivity and sustainability.

26. The concept of equity meant ensuring a sustainable balance through the just distribution of goods, services and opportunities according to the needs, rights

and responsibilities of individuals. The concept of productivity meant producing efficiently and effectively goods, services and factors which contributed to the improvement of the quality of life. The concept of self-sufficiency entailed countries of the region gradually acquiring the means to satisfy the population's basic requirements, while absorbing any changes that might take place at national and regional level. The notion of stability concerned the capacity for managing variables inside and outside the region within the framework of globalization. Lastly, sustainability could be defined as the regional capacity to use and produce resources of all kinds through established methods and processes, while retaining the ability to evolve in accordance with the social dynamics.

27. From that perspective, the principle of human development, the goal of reducing poverty and the strategy of food and nutrition security aimed to consolidate an order of well-being and economic and social justice for Central America. To that end, the Governments of the region had proposed the common aim of sustained reduction of the regional rate of poverty by at least 2 per cent a year, which would be feasible if they addressed themselves at the same time to the collateral effects and the structural causes of poverty. They continued to adopt practical means for implementing the agreed strategy, platform and goals.

28. During the Ecological Summit for Sustainable Development, held at Managua, Nicaragua, the week before, the Central American Presidents and the Prime Minister of Belize had adopted an instrument establishing an alliance for sustainable development, which contained a regional strategy for coordination and consultation. Its principal objectives were: the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; the reduction of the number of persons living in extreme poverty; the reintegration of refugees and displaced persons into a secure and stable Central America; the inclusion of the criteria of subsidiarity, community solidarity, reciprocality and self-management in poverty eradication policies, and human development on a priority basis.

29. Similarly, the International Conference for Peace and Development in Central America, to be held at Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in October 1994, would provide an occasion for Central American leaders to engage in debate with representatives of Central American civil society and the international community on the new agenda for the future of Central America, an integrated sustainable development strategy based on the consolidation of peace, the affirmation of democracy, social and economic development and environmental preservation. The Conference should also provide an opportunity for relaunching the dialogue on the Central American isthmus.

30. Those two meetings should enable the Central American countries to define the platform they planned to present at the forthcoming Summit of the Americas, to be held at Miami in December 1994, and at the World Summit for Social Development, to be held at Copenhagen in March 1995. The Central American countries expected new commitments to be undertaken at Miami concerning trade liberalization, flexibility in immigration policies, support for poverty eradication programmes and capacity-building efforts. At the World Summit, they would describe the experience they had acquired in implementing programmes to

ensure the transition from a phase of conflict to a phase of development. That experience was reflected in the declaration of commitments to displaced populations and those affected by conflict or extreme poverty, adopted by the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), held at Mexico City, Mexico, in June 1994.

31. The Central American countries were convinced that the stage of armed conflict had passed and that they must now respond to the challenge of development. Social problems, made more acute by the implementation of tough structural adjustment programmes, the net transfer of resources and the external debt burden, were a time bomb. In that connection, the World Summit for Social Development would afford a unique opportunity to formulate proposals and establish a broad consensus around the idea that social development must become a fundamental element in the consolidation of peace. The Central American countries hoped that, during its next sessions, the Preparatory Committee would adopt a political declaration calling on the members of the international community to assume responsibility for fulfilling the objectives of the World Summit and an action plan outlining specific measures for narrowing the huge gap between North and South.

32. Mr. ALDOSARI (Bahrain) said that social development should bring about lasting progress and an integral part of overall development, a precondition for peace among peoples. As societies were increasingly destabilized by disparities between different parts of the world, it was becoming urgent to address the root causes of social problems. The economic crisis, which had direct repercussions on social development, must also be brought under control.

33. Development policies and programmes should focus on the most disadvantaged categories and seek to increase the production capacity of the poor. His delegation believed that the international community must discharge its responsibilities with regard to food security and thereby help to eliminate poverty, reduce differences in living standards and satisfy social needs. Social services had a decisive role to play in that connection. Policies to control unemployment and create jobs should enable all members of society to participate in economic and social development.

34. As for social integration, encouragement must be given to any initiative to strengthen solidarity among the different sectors of society and ensure social cohesion, while respecting the values peculiar to each society. In that connection, programmes for the family - the basic unit which ensured the economic and social protection of youth, the elderly and the disabled - were vital.

35. His delegation hoped that the World Summit for Social Development would help to mobilize efforts for development and socio-economic progress. It also hoped that the positions stated during the preparatory meetings would give participants a clear picture of the problems. That should facilitate the elaboration of a programme of work for the Summit and of the final declaration to be adopted at Copenhagen.

36. Mr. WOIE (Norway), recalling that the General Assembly had in its resolution 47/85 invited Governments to include more youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly, expressed the hope that the number of youth representatives participating in the debates of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly would be greater than it had been during the current session. The world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond should be included in the agenda of the fiftieth session. In accordance with resolution 45/103, a plenary meeting of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly should be devoted to the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. His delegation hoped that, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/49/434), the General Assembly would allot sufficient time for consideration of the topic of youth.

37. As a result of a General Assembly initiative, the Youth Forum of the United Nations system, held at Vienna in 1991, had brought together 150 representatives of national, regional and international non-governmental organizations for youth and agencies of the United Nations. The next meeting of Youth Forum would be held in 1996; thereafter, the Forum would meet biennially.

38. While youth lacked diplomatic skills, experience and respect for formal procedures, they did have the necessary enthusiasm, open-mindedness and creativity to confront problems; a dialogue with youth would not only create a new dynamic in the entire United Nations community but would also enable large groups of the population to participate in decision-making processes all over the world. The International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, had stressed the importance of youth participation in controlling population growth. Its Programme of Action highlighted the link between the lack of education among young women in many countries and world population growth.

39. He pointed to a disturbing current trend, namely young people's lack of confidence in the established political system, which they no longer viewed as capable of guaranteeing their job security and access to education. That discouraged them from making use of their democratic rights. Uncertainty about their future, coupled with their lack of influence all over the world often left young persons indifferent or plunged them into despair. Those problems could be overcome if they were given an opportunity to participate in society and in the development of the world.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

40. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would resume its debate on agenda item 95 on 31 October and 1 November following the negotiations to be held by the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development. In view of the number of delegations wishing to speak on the question, the Committee would devote an additional meeting to consideration of that item. The time and date of that meeting would be announced shortly.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

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THIRD COMMITTEE
11th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/49/24 and Add.1, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/213, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/294, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/422, A/49/434, A/49/435, A/49/462 and Corr.1; A/C.3/49/4)

1. Mr. RAHIM (Bangladesh) said that social issues were based on the recognition of the centrality of the individual, the acceptance of human equality and the worth and dignity of the human person. Yet social development was predicated on progress in economic development and together with environment and population formed the logic of comprehensive sustainable development; they formed an integral whole. The main motor of development would remain accelerated economic growth, fuelled by additional resource inputs.

2. Despite considerable economic progress, social development had largely been unsuccessful in most developing countries. There was an increasing feeling that social development required a comprehensive approach on the part of national Governments and the international community. The economic and trade policies of the developed countries, as well as international and domestic political issues, clearly influenced social problems in the developing countries.

3. Any approach to social development needed to focus on a whole range of chronic social problems. Developing countries were addressing those areas, but many of the problems involved global factors beyond the control of individual States, and were compounded by difficulty in bringing about sustainable economic development. That caused falling standards of living, mass poverty, and health, nutrition and housing problems, compounded by natural and man-made disasters in many developing States.

4. Bangladesh, however, had made considerable progress in social development; human development was considered most important for long-term poverty alleviation and sustained economic growth. Empowerment of women and education for development received the greatest priority; an important aspect of that was a major new programme of free tuition for female students.

5. In the fields of health and population, considerable progress had also been achieved. His country's immunization programme currently covered over 80 per cent of children, population growth had fallen to around 1.8 per cent annually, and poverty-alleviation efforts were well under way. Women were receiving training, and being motivated to participate in all aspects of society. His Government was also seeking to address poverty alleviation through regional cooperation.

6. Having intensified national and regional efforts for social development, Bangladesh now sought a wider, collective approach. At the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, an urgent global and comprehensive approach was needed

to social development, which was the concern of both rich and poor. The final declaration should identify the objectives of social development and set achievable goals, matched by adequate resource commitments. His delegation welcomed the suggestion that the Summit should produce an international strategy for social development, which would provide the basis for social progress, development and peace in the coming years.

7. Mr. Kwang Jae LEE (Republic of Korea) said that, despite prevailing feelings of uncertainty and insecurity in the current era of transition, a new vision had been found which might lead to genuine world peace. The international community had acknowledged the inextricable relationship between development and peace, highlighting the importance of human-centred development and addressing the root causes of social, economic and political problems. One of the greatest challenges was the achievement of social development, without which neither sustainable economic development nor political stability could be achieved. Concrete actions should be taken to improve the human condition, eradicate poverty and secure fundamental human rights.

8. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Development". The various conferences being held on social issues demonstrated the resolve of the United Nations to further enhance social development and the will of the world community to take steps towards addressing current social ills. He hoped that a feeling of solidarity among people would be created at all levels, which would profoundly effect international security and the welfare of future generations.

9. Social development required the participation and cooperation of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, mass media and intergovernmental agencies. There should be further efforts towards promoting the participation of vulnerable groups in planning and decision-making. The empowerment of all actors in society was essential for social progress.

10. Despite varying national priorities, attention should not be diverted from securing fundamental human rights and considering universal standards. It was also necessary to create an environment that would facilitate social development, with attention to the different development needs of developing countries. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development would be a milestone, providing an opportunity for redefining sustainable development - with appropriate balance between economic efficiency and social justice - and for integrating the needs of socially marginalized groups into development programmes. His Government was ready to share its development experience and contribute fully to efforts for global social development. He also hoped that the Manila Declaration on social development adopted at the recent conference of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), would make a valuable contribution to the World Summit.

11. One of the main priorities in social development was to address the vast inequalities currently existing in the world. Greater emphasis should be placed on gender equality, particularly in the division of labour. The needs and aspirations of youth should be reviewed, with firm commitment to strengthening

youth-related activities in order to develop the full potential of youth. On the issue of ageing, he welcomed recent United Nations efforts, and called for additional measures to raise public awareness of the elderly as a valuable part of society.

12. The general public's conception of disability was also a challenge to be faced. It was crucial to raise awareness and to eliminate socially determined barriers through development activities and legislation. He welcomed the adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

13. The role of the family was increasingly important; it provided the basic foundation for social stability. Relevant international, national and grass-roots action should continue beyond the International Year of the Family, with special attention to improving the living conditions of low-income and single-parent families.

14. The Korean people hoped that the international community would reconcile its differences and create a greater feeling of solidarity. The goal should be to achieve social development in accordance with the ideals of sustainable development. In that respect, a human-centred approach would have a more lasting effect in achieving stability and prosperity. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of the democratic participation of all actors in society, the protection of fundamental human rights and the promotion of social welfare and equality.

15. Mr. SISWOYO (Indonesia) said that the World Summit for Social Development would provide the opportunity to assess social progress and the effectiveness of international machinery aimed at the economic and social advancement of all peoples. In the context of youth affairs, the Ministers of the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, meeting at Cairo in June 1994, had called on the United Nations General Assembly to devote special plenary meetings in 1995 to commemorating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and adopting the draft world youth programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond, as well as a youth statement of intent. Stressing the importance of international cooperation and national action with regard to youth affairs, he said that the expansion of employment opportunities in line with education levels was particularly significant for young people. In Indonesia, where the educated urban youth in particular were hit by unemployment, measures were being taken to expand those opportunities, improve vocational training programmes and follow a market-oriented school curriculum. A related issue that should also be discussed at the Summit was better access to financial support during and after periods of study.

16. Progress had been made in raising social awareness with a view to addressing the problems faced by the disabled. His delegation continued to regard the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992) as a means of implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, while the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with

Disabilities provided a further framework for the participation of disabled persons in social and development activities. He also shared the view that the Long-Term Strategy to Implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons should form an integral part of the goals and programmes of society at large.

17. His delegation agreed with the conclusion reached in the Secretary-General's report on the status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends (A/49/213) that cooperative enterprises were a means of creating productive employment, overcoming poverty and achieving social integration, which were the main themes of the Summit. In that connection, measures were already under way in Indonesia to enhance the functioning and overall resources of cooperatives, underscoring the view that their role in involving people in national development and improving their situation should be supported.

18. His country was committed to ensuring that the World Summit for Social Development was a resounding success that would lead to tangible and sustainable social progress. The non-aligned countries attached great importance to international cooperation for social development and had emphasized at the aforementioned Cairo Conference that the Summit's core issues should place people and their social needs at the heart of international endeavours, the aim being to adopt an action-oriented plan with clear objectives, means of implementation and appropriate follow-up. Although preparatory endeavours for the Summit had been slower than anticipated, he was confident that an acceptable draft declaration and draft programme of action would soon be forthcoming as a vehicle for the advancement of social development into the next century. Finally, he underlined the importance of a holistic approach to the multifaceted issues of social development and his conviction that higher standards of living in larger freedom could be achieved only through international cooperation and dialogue.

19. Ms. FERTEKLIGIL (Turkey) said the 1995 World Summit for Social Development would be of the greatest importance for the future of humanity, and would demonstrate the determination of the international community to deal with the world's endemic social problems. It was of overriding importance for the world community to cooperate in fostering social development, which in turn would help to maintain peace and stability. Her Government welcomed the emerging consensus on the historic importance of that Summit.

20. Turkish society was experiencing rapid social and economic changes, leading to increased urbanization. The Government was pursuing its efforts to enhance the quality of life and to promote equal opportunities in employment, education and health. It was mobilizing the country's resources for sustainable economic, social and environmental development. High priority was being given to social integration, especially the needs and potential contribution of families, young people, the elderly, women and the disabled.

21. The Government's fifth five-year plan included measures of high priority designed to help the young, with particular emphasis on preventing delinquency and drug abuse and protecting young people from disease, especially AIDS.

22. Measures in favour of the disabled had long been embodied in Turkey's legislation and programmes, with emphasis on the practical aspects of integrating the disabled into society. The numbers of disabled people world wide were actually growing; armed conflicts continued to exacerbate that problem.

23. In most countries, especially developed countries, the numbers of elderly people were increasing rapidly owing to falling mortality and improved health care. Accordingly, it was essential to enable the elderly to participate fully in society, and society would in turn benefit from their wealth of creativity and experience. The International Day for the Elderly provided an excellent opportunity for showing due consideration to elderly persons; in Turkish society, they were traditionally treated with particular respect.

24. The International Year of the Family had emphasized the role of the family in society not only as a source of stability and well-being, but also as a major force in social transformation and solidarity. She particularly wished to underline the importance of the family in that respect.

25. Programmes for the eradication of poverty had not so far succeeded in making a major difference to the world situation; additional efforts would doubtless be required for any success to be achieved.

26. The various United Nations activities in the field of social development would provide guidance for the world community's efforts in the remaining years of the twentieth century. The success of those activities would require undiminished solidarity with all social groups in need of help.

27. Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group of Central and South American States, reiterated the Group's firm commitment to the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development and to constructive participation in the preparatory process. In the past 30 years, the gap between rich and poor had doubled; endemic social problems posed daunting tasks. The first of three basic assumptions to emerge from recent discussions was that development should not only incorporate such concepts as sustainable or social development but should also integrate the interests of the diverse parties concerned. The common goal of development must be to meet the basic needs of both poor and affluent societies. Secondly, development issues were of mutual interest and hence of mutual responsibility. Consensus on the social aspects of development required a willingness to recognize the global nature of the social crisis, an ability to avoid rhetoric and a real commitment to concrete action. Thirdly, income distribution, protection of the environment and the promotion of peace and democracy were severely limited without sustainable economic growth, which was both the engine of development and the necessary means of redressing social imbalances.

28. The three core issues of the Summit, namely poverty alleviation, productive employment and social integration, should therefore be addressed from that perspective. Poverty alleviation demanded a proper balance between relief and structural policies. Although Governments were primarily responsible for devising and implementing such policies, success depended on an international economic environment that promoted global development based on fairness and mutual benefit among countries. The promotion of macroeconomic stability and an open international trade system were central to global sustainable economic development. Furthermore, since even prosperous societies were threatened by high unemployment, the creation of more productive employment should form a basic objective with a view to overcoming poverty and achieving social integration. The highest priority should be devoted to unemployment reduction, particularly among the young; support to small and medium-sized enterprises; strengthening and expansion of training programmes; implementation of basic agreements on labour relations; and evaluation of the role of technology in job creation, since access to technology was critical to overcoming underdevelopment, and did not necessarily threaten employment.

29. Social integration would be improved by participation in the productive process and an equitable distribution of income and other economic benefits, requiring the provision of equal work opportunities, for which equal access to education, knowledge and information was vital. Democratic Governments were also instrumental in bringing vulnerable or marginalized segments into the mainstream of society.

30. In conclusion, he reaffirmed the Rio Group's profound belief in the unity of the agreed objectives of the Summit. International cooperation on social development issues would mutually benefit States and universally benefit people, who were the centre of development.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Friday, 21 October 1994
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Bureau had received a request from a number of delegations to make the following proposal to the President of the General Assembly: "The Third Committee formally recommends to the General Assembly that it mark, in plenary meeting, the opening of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, to begin on 10 December 1994". The recommendation would be made on the understanding that discussion of and action on the corresponding agenda item (item 103) would be undertaken in the Third Committee, in accordance with the original allocation of the item by the Assembly. The Bureau had discussed the proposal and recommended it to the Committee for consideration. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt that proposal.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that he had also received a request to invite the Special Rapporteur on the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities to make a statement to the Third Committee in the context of agenda item 95. Since there would be no report from the Special Rapporteur to the current session of the General Assembly, the invitation would be issued on an exceptional basis. The Bureau supported the request. Accordingly, he took it that the Committee wished to invite the Special Rapporteur to make a short statement to the Committee under item 95.

4. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/49/336)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (Programmes 25, 26, 35, 36 and 37)

5. The CHAIRMAN said that at its 5th meeting, the Committee had agreed to set aside a meeting to discuss items 105 and 108. That decision had been taken in response to letters from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.3/49/2 and 3).

6. Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) said that the text of programme 35 in the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/49/6 (Prog. 35)) did not adequately reflect the letter and spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and in some cases distorted and omitted important provisions of that document. Paragraph 35.1 of programme 35 should be deleted because it was not in accordance with the Vienna Declaration. Although paragraph 35.2 referred to the interdependent and interrelated nature of human rights, it should also reflect the provision in part I, paragraph 5, of the Vienna Declaration that all human rights were indivisible. The second sentence of paragraph 35.3 of programme 35 should include the provision set forth in part I, paragraph 32, of the Declaration. In addition, the third sentence of paragraph 35.3 should mention the important role of human rights components in

specific arrangements concerning some peace-keeping operations, referred to in part II, paragraph 97, of the Declaration.

7. Paragraph 35.4 of programme 35 should include the reference to effective measures against the sale of children and organs, child prostitution, child pornography, as well as other forms of sexual abuse, contained in part II, paragraph 48, of the Vienna Declaration. Paragraph 35.7 should include the reference in part II, paragraph 67, of the Declaration to assistance provided upon the request of Governments for the conduct of free and fair elections. That reflected an important consensus that had been set forth in General Assembly resolutions dealing with respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Furthermore, the text of part I, paragraph 31, of the Vienna Declaration should be added at the end of paragraph 35.7. Paragraphs 35.8 and 35.9 should be amended to include the reference in part II, paragraph 1, of the Declaration concerning cooperation in order to rationalize and streamline human rights activities, taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplication.

8. His delegation noted with satisfaction the various objectives set forth in part A, section 2, of programme 35, entitled "Overall strategy". Nevertheless, his delegation wished to propose the inclusion of a paragraph (r) on "Taking concrete measures and finding the necessary resources to combat new forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", and a new subparagraph (s) on "Defining measures to take effective action in promoting and protecting the rights of the child".

9. Referring to part A, section 3, of programme 35, his delegation thought that subprogrammes 3 and 4 dealt with essentially the same questions and should be combined into a single subprogramme entitled "Special procedures". Lastly, his delegation wished to propose the inclusion of two new subprogrammes on "Implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development and adoption of measures to guarantee economic, social and cultural rights" and "Effective measures to combat new forms of racism, intolerance and xenophobia".

10. Mr. MUCH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Secretariat had produced a balanced document which reflected well United Nations policies to achieve human rights objectives, including those contained in General Assembly resolution 48/141. The medium-term plan set forth a comprehensive approach to the need to address the implementation of all human rights and avoid attempts to single out specific ones. In particular, it paid adequate attention to the need to ensure preventive action in the field of human rights and further integrate human rights into the objectives and policies of the various United Nations bodies and programmes as well as into early warning, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building activities.

11. Programme 35 also accorded adequate attention to the efforts of the Centre for Human Rights to enhance coordination between special human rights procedures and treaty-based human rights bodies, as well as between special procedures and the larger United Nations system. The European Union believed that those efforts would enhance the effectiveness of those mechanisms and make better use

of existing resources, and looked forward to the detailed report on improvement of existing protection and monitoring mechanisms, referred to in paragraph 35.51.

12. Ms. BUCK (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that on the whole, the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan in document A/49/6 (Prog. 35) adequately reflected the changes that had occurred over the past two years and the legislative framework guiding the human rights work of the United Nations, particularly the revisions resulting from the World Conference on Human Rights. The revised medium-term plan preserved the fine balance achieved in the Vienna Declaration on the relative importance of various issues, such as early warning, the prevention of human rights violations and the right to development. She was particularly pleased that the document referred to efforts to coordinate the work of the special procedures, the treaty-based human rights bodies and the larger United Nations system, and efforts to improve the efficiency of the reporting system.

13. Although the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand delegations might have wished to have seen greater emphasis on such aspects as technical and advisory services and the implementation of existing norms, they were aware of the danger of attempting to renegotiate consensus language. The medium-term plan was not a negotiated text, but reflected the consensus decisions already adopted. The document was a balanced and useful reflection of those decisions and had the full support of the three delegations.

14. After the lengthy and difficult negotiations in Vienna, there should be no further delay in implementing the decisions taken at the World Conference. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action implied a significant reorientation and expansion of the United Nations human rights programme. That required the allocation of additional resources to the Centre for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner, which in the long term would result in increased coordination and ensure more effective use of resources and improved impact of activities.

15. Ms. TOMIC (Slovenia) said that programme 35 (A/49/6) responded adequately to the need that had arisen in recent years to strengthen the financial and human resources of United Nations human rights bodies. Programme 35 set forth comprehensive and achievable proposals aimed at adapting human rights machinery, meeting current and future needs and ensuring protection and realization of all human rights in a balanced manner. Her delegation agreed with the form and substance of the six subprogrammes in part A, section 3, of programme 35 and was particularly pleased with the course of action of the Secretariat set forth in paragraphs 35.31 to 35.35. Slovenia fully supported the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan and hoped that they would meet with the approval of the Fifth Committee, in view of the importance of ensuring adequate additional funds to implement them on the basis of budgetary and extrabudgetary resources.

16. Mr. BIGGAR (Ireland) said that his delegation fully supported the position of the European Union on programme 35 and welcomed the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan (A/49/6 (Prog. 35)). He noted in particular that

paragraph 35.1 firmly grounded United Nations human rights activities in the Charter. Programme 35 provided a comprehensive overview of United Nations activities in the field, especially with regard to implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Ireland particularly welcomed the multifaceted strategy set forth in paragraph 35.15 of programme 35, which provided a complete and balanced guide for the work of the Organization in that area. He noted the reference in paragraph 35.38 rendering the international human rights norms more operative, and stressed that the objective of making United Nations human rights activities more operative should apply to all subprogrammes. Lastly, his delegation underscored the need for a significant increase in the resources for human rights programmes, particularly a major increase in the proportion of the regular budget allocated to the Centre for Human Rights.

17. Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico) said that paragraph 35.21 of programme 35 did not fully conform to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action - especially part II, paragraphs 1 to 3 - and that paragraphs 35.26 (d) and (f) needed to be amended accordingly.

18. The second part of paragraph 35.21 had no basis in either the Vienna Declaration or General Assembly resolution 48/141. Part II, paragraph 97, of the Vienna Declaration had a very different meaning. Therefore the second part of paragraph 35.21 and the corresponding paragraph 35.26 (b) should be deleted. Paragraph 35.23 exceeded the terms of part II, paragraph 7, of the Vienna Declaration and should therefore be brought into line with that paragraph.

19. Subprogramme 3 of programme 35 related to part II, section E, of the Vienna Declaration, entitled "Implementation and monitoring methods", and should be amended accordingly. Subprogramme 3 should also be amended to define more precisely the role of the Centre for Human Rights as the executing body for decisions made by the relevant intergovernmental organizations; she was referring in particular to paragraphs 35.43 and 35.44. Moreover, the term "early warning" should be deleted from paragraph 35.45 since there was no reference to that concept either in the Vienna Declaration or in the resolution establishing the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights.

20. Paragraph 35.48 should be amended to take account of existing procedures and of the fact that the references to confidential studies and fact-finding missions had no foundation in the Vienna Declaration. Similarly, paragraph 35.52 should be deleted, since references to preventive diplomacy had no basis in the Vienna Declaration.

21. Subprogramme 5 should be subdivided further into one subprogramme dealing with discrimination and the promotion and protection of the human rights of vulnerable groups; and another on the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

22. Referring to paragraph 60 of document A/49/336, she said that the transfer of the Electoral Assistance Division to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations was inappropriate, since the majority of electoral assistance

programmes had been implemented outside the framework of peace-keeping operations.

23. Mr. KUEHL (United States of America) said that the revised medium-term plan deserved support. He reminded delegations that they were not establishing new human rights programmes but rather developing existing programmes. Programme 35 did not need to be based solely on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. There was a broad foundation of United Nations mandates, declarations and precedents which should be taken into account.

24. He said that part II, paragraph 97, of the Vienna Declaration supported the human rights component of peace-keeping operations. Referring to points made earlier concerning the rights of children, he said that the Secretariat could not put anything into the medium-term plan which had not been established by mandate; that could properly be done through the Commission on Human Rights. It would also be wrong for the Secretariat to include a reference to unilateral measures or trade embargoes in the medium-term plan, since the relevant paragraph in the Vienna Programme of Action (I.31) was addressed to "States" and not "the United Nations".

25. Lastly, the arrangement of subprogrammes was the prerogative of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, according to their mandate. He urged that their actions should not be circumscribed. If there were objections to the revised medium-term plan, delegations should debate them in the appropriate forums.

26. Mrs. FENG Cui (China) said that the revised medium-term plan was not a comprehensive and accurate reflection of the relevant General Assembly resolutions or of priorities in the field of human rights. The programme should therefore undergo substantial revision. A longer period for discussion should also be allocated to human rights issues, which were sensitive and important.

27. References in paragraphs 35.21, 35.45 and 35.52 of programme 35 to peace-keeping operations and early warning were not based on the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Paragraph 35.26 (b) on preventive diplomacy included wording which did not come from that Programme of Action. Paragraph 35.12 on the mandate for the High Commissioner for Human Rights was not an accurate reflection of resolution 48/141, since the words "within the framework of the overall competence, authority and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights," which appeared in paragraph 4 of the resolution, had been omitted. Similarly, the words "at the request of the State concerned", in paragraph 4 (d) of the same resolution, had been omitted from paragraph 35.13.

28. Paragraph 35.22 and other paragraphs referred to new procedures concerning women's issues. She would like to know what those new procedures were, since they were not mentioned in a General Assembly resolution. The programme of action for the United Nations decade for human rights education mentioned in paragraph 35.15 (l) had not yet been adopted, so should not be referred to. She

suggested that, after the Third Committee had considered the document, it should be submitted to the Fifth Committee.

29. Ms. MURUGESAN (India) said that in the course of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as represented by programme 35, a certain imbalance had been introduced. Her delegation could not support the creation of new United Nations organs or offices until they had been approved. According to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, any increase in resources for human rights activities should not be at the expense of development programmes. The Centre for Human Rights should be subject to that provision, which should be specifically mentioned in programme 35. Her delegation would find it difficult to support the six subprogrammes, which focused only on civil and political rights, unless they were balanced by a programme on the right to development and social rights.

30. The coordination of the Centre for Human Rights and peace-keeping operations should be governed by the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolution 47/120. Women's representation in United Nations bodies should be strictly governed by geographical equity. Her delegation strongly supported the proposals by the Centre for Human Rights on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. She said that objectivity was an extremely important criterion in the overall strategy of programme 35, and she called for an annual report on the staffing of the Centre.

31. Referring to subprogramme 1, she said that the Centre's policy proposals should be subject to review by Governments before approval. The Centre should report regularly to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to Governments in matters concerning coordination with other United Nations organs.

32. Objectivity was also essential in media reporting on human rights. She requested a report from the Centre for Human Rights on media coverage of human rights issues in the past five years and its effect on policy. She further requested information on the formulation and staffing of advisory services. Referring to subprogramme 3, she said that the choice of experts should be made on the basis of geographical distribution.

33. The Working Group on Communications of the Human Rights Committee needed more resources. She requested information on the number, sources and content of communications received yearly and on how they were verified and examined. Field missions and monitoring operations should be properly mandated. She asked what proportion of the budget of the Centre for Human Rights went to each mission. She also asked that experts whom the Centre for Human Rights proposed to consult should be listed and approved by intergovernmental bodies before consultations began.

34. Mr. AQUARONE (The Netherlands) said that it was not the time for detailed comment on the medium-term plan. The Secretariat should be given the flexibility it needed to comply with its mandate. The text reflected the aims of promoting and protecting human rights and implementing the Vienna Declaration

and Programme of Action. However, he stressed the need for adequate resources for the Centre for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The amounts earmarked thus far seemed inadequate.

35. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) said that it was essential to seek the participation of intergovernmental bodies in deliberations on administrative matters with a view to ensuring that their decisions were fully implemented and adequately reflected in the narratives of the medium-term plan. He also agreed that an additional report should be compiled to address points that were not fully reflected in the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/49/336), namely the impact of restructuring on United Nations programmes, and measures taken to adjust that process in accordance with the decisions of the relevant intergovernmental bodies. Those points applied particularly to the section of the report entitled "Human rights", in which connection he stressed that existing human rights mechanisms were primarily responsible for dealing with human rights issues.

36. Stressing the central role of the medium-term plan, he fully shared the Secretary-General's view that it was a useful tool for enhancing the democratic character of the United Nations and a means of ensuring the effectiveness of the Secretariat. He also fully supported the recommendations of the thirty-fourth session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination concerning programmes 25 (Global social issues and policies), 26 (Social integration), 36 (International protection of and assistance to refugees) and 37 (Humanitarian assistance). However, with regard to programme 35 (Promotion and protection of human rights), it was his country's view that human rights issues should have no undue political connotations. Finally, he supported strengthening the activities of the Centre for Human Rights, particularly concerning international cooperation for the promotion of human rights, although enhancing its capacity should not prejudice the economic and social resources of the Secretariat.

37. Mr. SUTOYO (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the non-aligned countries, urged the Committee to allocate further time to careful discussion and analysis of document A/49/6 (Prog. 35), failing which it would be unable to convey its views to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

38. Mr. VAUGHN-FENN (United Kingdom) reiterated his country's view that such a debate was unnecessary, duplicative and circular, since the medium-term plan simply illustrated a means of implementing decisions already reached. The current session was aimed at enabling those with strong views to express them orally before the Committee responded in writing to the letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. He believed that the Cuban representative had misconstrued the objective of the medium-term plan, which drew its mandated authority from all corners of the United Nations and not merely from the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the aim being to reflect the evolving policy of the United Nations on human rights. Reference to the relevant resolutions should be sufficient to assuage the concerns expressed over specific formulas contained in the medium-term plan, while the Commission on Human Rights provided an annual forum where any transgressions attributed to the Secretariat

could be discussed. It was therefore important to move on swiftly to the stage of implementing the medium-term plan.

39. Mr. MUCH (Germany), agreeing with the previous speaker, urged Indonesia to withdraw its proposal; further discussion of a subject on which agreement had already been reached would create a bad precedent and would not augur well for the continuation of fruitful debate.

40. Ms. FENG Cui (China) stated that any reservations on the subject should be conveyed to the Fifth Committee on the valid basis that programme 35 had not even been discussed. Adding that the medium-term plan did not consistently reflect General Assembly resolutions or the spirit of the Vienna Declaration, she said that it should be revised.

41. Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) reiterated the need to ensure that consistency with adopted principles, standards and documents was maintained; programme 35, in his view, distorted both the Vienna Declaration and General Assembly resolution 48/141.

42. Mr. MAZLAN (Malaysia) drew the conclusion that the difficulties of some delegations lay not in the endorsement per se of document A/49/6 (Prog. 35), but in its failure to adhere to the Vienna Declaration. Yet the argument that it should not be based on the Declaration alone was refuted by statements contained in the document itself. The fact remained, however, that without consensus, the document would meet further difficulties in the Fifth Committee. He therefore supported the Indonesian proposal for more thorough discussion.

43. Mr. PALIHAKKARA (Sri Lanka), while not denying that document A/49/6 (Prog. 35) was essentially good, concurred that delegations were entitled to comment on some of its disturbing deficiencies. The problem was that the document quoted legislative mandates only selectively and contained political statements and judgements not based on documents referred to in the section entitled "General orientation". Peacemaking and peace-keeping, for example, were governed by General Assembly resolution 47/120, which had been carefully negotiated. In discussing the integration of human rights objectives into such activities, however, the document made no reference to that resolution. Moreover, any human rights segments required in the course of peace-keeping operations were mandated by the intergovernmental bodies responsible for organizing those operations. He further shared the view that more thought should have been given to economic and cultural rights, as well as to the resources that would enable the High Commissioner for Human Rights to fulfil his mandate. Such comments were made in good faith with a view to seeking clarification from the Secretariat.

44. Mr. MUCH (Germany) said he fully respected the national positions expressed, but emphasized that a method and time-frame had already been agreed for the presentation of ideas on the subject. Underscoring the absence of restrictions concerning the length of written comments, which would be faithfully conveyed to the Fifth Committee, he urged adherence to the agreed procedure.

45. Mr. REZVANI (Iran) said that, although considerable care had been devoted to the revision of programme 35, it was not an accurate reflection of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; rather, it was the interpretation of the Declaration by the Centre for Human Rights. The revised programme departed from the letter and spirit of the Declaration and adopted a futuristic approach.

46. His delegation therefore wished to propose a number of amendments. Paragraph 35.1 should be deleted. As to paragraph 35.2, he noted that the framework for the future development of the United Nations human rights programme did not lie solely in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, but also in other relevant resolutions. In the third sentence, the word "indivisible," should be inserted before "interdependent", in accordance with part I, paragraph 5, of the Declaration. In paragraph 35.3, paragraph 32 of part I of the Vienna Declaration should be inserted before the final sentence. The final sentence of paragraph 35.3 should be redrafted in accordance with part II, paragraph 97, of the Vienna Declaration.

47. In paragraph 35.4, the words "through new procedures" should be deleted from the first sentence, since they were not mentioned in the Vienna Declaration. In paragraph 35.7, the second sentence should end with the words "development and human rights", and the clause "and that assistance be provided in the human rights aspects of democratic elections" should be replaced by the clause "In this context, assistance provided upon the request of Governments for the conduct of free and fair elections," which was contained in part II, paragraph 67, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Paragraph 35.8 should be replaced by the second sentence of part II, paragraph 1, of the Declaration.

48. In paragraph 35.9, the word "renewed" in the second sentence should be omitted, since the Declaration did not mention renewal. In the same sentence, the period should be replaced by a comma and the words "also rationalization and streamlining while taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplication" should be added. The final sentence should be redrafted in accordance with the last sentence of part II, paragraph 1, of the Declaration.

49. In paragraph 35.15, subparagraph (l) should be deleted, because a United Nations decade for human rights education had not yet been proclaimed. Subparagraph (o) should be deleted, since there was no specific reference in the Vienna Declaration to the idea it contained. A new final subparagraph should be added reading: "The adoption of new and concrete measures, in order to combat new forms and manifestations of racism, xenophobia or related intolerance", in accordance with part II, paragraph 20, of the Vienna Declaration.

50. In paragraph 35.16, subprogrammes 3 and 4 were repetitious and should be merged into one programme entitled "Special procedures" and the corresponding paragraphs 35.36 to 35.52 should be streamlined. His delegation proposed two new subprogrammes, "Right to development and implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development", and "Development of strong policies to prevent and combat all forms and manifestations of racism, xenophobia or related intolerance".

51. In paragraph 35.21, the word "all" in the second sentence should be replaced by the word "relevant". The last sentence should be deleted, because there was no mention of early warning, peacemaking, peace-keeping or post-conflict peace-building in the Vienna Declaration. In the third sentence of paragraph 35.22 the words "through new procedures" should be deleted, again because the concept was not included in the Declaration. Lastly, his delegation proposed the deletion of the final sentence of paragraph 35.23 and of subparagraph (b) of paragraph 35.26.

52. The Committee clearly needed additional time for a full discussion of the revisions to programme 35. A mere compilation of written and oral views would by no means resolve the concerns that had been voiced, and the Fifth Committee expected a consensus on the substance of the document.

53. Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that the Committee needed more time to discuss the proposed revisions to programme 35. Delegations could express reservations only after the text had been adopted; both the revised programme and the reservations could be transmitted to the Fifth Committee.

54. Mr. THEUERMANN (Austria) emphasized that the Committee's task was not to endorse or adopt programme 35 but, rather, to bring its views thereon to the attention of the Fifth Committee. Accordingly, delegations should provide their written comments to the Chairman, who would forward them to the Fifth Committee.

55. Ms. MURUGESAN (India) said that there were serious deficiencies in document A/49/6 (Prog. 35) which must be corrected. Unless the Committee forwarded an agreed text to the Fifth Committee, it would simply be transferring the problem to the Fifth Committee. If its discussion at the current meeting had no impact on the document, the meeting would have been irrelevant and wasted.

56. Following a discussion in which the CHAIRMAN, Mr. ABU HADID (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. KUEHL (United States of America), Mr. MUCH (Germany), Mr. MAZLAN (Malaysia), Mr. SUTOYO (Indonesia) and Ms. NEWELL (Secretary of the Committee) took part, the CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would endeavour to schedule a further meeting at which the Committee could continue its discussion of programme 35. In any event, interested delegations should submit their comments on the programme in writing. Once the Committee had concluded its discussion he would send a summary of the discussion to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, along with any written submissions.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
13th meeting
held on
Monday, 31 October 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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A/C.3/49/SR.13
7 November 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

94-81881 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/49/24 and Add.1, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/213, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/294, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/422-S/1994/1086, A/49/434, 435, 462 and Corr.1, and 506; A/C.3/49/4/Rev.1)

1. Mr. STEFANOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation welcomed the decision to convene the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995, and believed that it should adopt specific goals and actions in its final documents. Much preparatory work remained to be done and concerted efforts by Member States were indispensable in order to complete the drafting exercise at the third session of the Preparatory Committee. The draft declaration and draft programme of action were interrelated: the draft programme of action should clearly specify ways to achieve the goals laid down in the draft declaration and should include specific international and regional initiatives for drawing up national plans and programmes and evaluating the overall role of the United Nations system in carrying out the actions proposed. The draft programme of action should, in particular, set forth practical measures to ensure that the decisions adopted at the World Summit were followed up.

2. The social aspects of reform in countries, like Bulgaria, which had undertaken a radical transformation towards a free-market economy were becoming increasingly important. While the prime responsibility for the success of the transition lay with the Governments and peoples of the countries concerned, the magnitude of the reform was such that significant international support was necessary. Bulgaria was confident that the United Nations and related organizations would continue to facilitate the access of those countries to major markets.

3. In the past several years, his country had made considerable progress towards establishing the legal basis for a market economy and consolidating democratic institutions. Appropriate measures had been taken to bring the overall functioning of the economy and trade policy into compliance with international rules and practice. Nevertheless, those efforts were being seriously undermined by the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, which had closed Bulgaria's traditional route to the markets of Western Europe. His Government's strict implementation of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had resulted in heavy economic losses and placed severe pressure on social spending. Despite the introduction of social safety measures, growing unemployment had become a major issue. The deteriorating living standards of a significant part of the population could harm economic and political reforms.

4. In the general environment of economic liberalization, his Government was implementing a number of special-assistance programmes for vulnerable groups such as the disabled, the elderly and unemployed youth. Long-term programmes

had been adopted at the municipal level to prevent disabilities, promote rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities and provide information and education to the disabled. The role of national non-governmental organizations was particularly important. Bulgaria had also taken special measures to provide social protection to elderly persons and was doing its best to address their needs and create good conditions for retired people.

5. His country was actively participating in observing the International Year of the Family. A national coordinating committee was responsible for preparing, monitoring and following up activities for the Year. Measures to address the needs of young families, many of which were severely affected by housing shortages and unemployment, were being carried out by governmental bodies and a number of national non-governmental organizations.

6. Ms. WHITE (Canada) stressed the need to rethink the current approach to social development. Something was amiss when conventional economic indicators were positive but unemployment and poverty were on the rise. High levels of poverty and unemployment increased the danger of social conflict. A comprehensive approach was necessary in order to improve social, economic and environmental factors in any development strategy. In order to ensure peace and stability, investing in people must be at least as important as investing in military hardware. That message should emerge clearly at the World Summit for Social Development. The Summit should also recognize the dignity and potential of people living in poverty. The draft declaration should stress that people who lived in poverty were quite capable of finding solutions to their problems when given the means to do so.

7. The issue of gender equality and equity must also be one of the major messages to emerge from the World Summit. Moreover, good governance, respect for human rights, sound monetary and fiscal management, open trading systems and enhanced access to markets were essential for creating an environment conducive to development.

8. Most countries, including Canada, were searching for new ways to create jobs, reduce poverty and prevent social disintegration. The World Summit would be a catalyst in that regard. The issue of unemployment, in particular, should be given greater attention in the draft programme of action. The World Summit must also make a strong plea for a global partnership. With increasing demands for available funds, the need to pool resources and talents became even more apparent. Other concepts such as sustainable livelihood and sustainable human development should be further exploited.

9. During the International Year of the Family, the celebration across Canada of the strength and value of family ties was a manifestation of a deep-rooted public awareness of the need to ensure the well-being of families. That attitude would last long after the official celebrations were over. Canada placed high priority on ensuring that elderly persons had the opportunity to live productive, independent and dignified lives and sought to ensure them income security, access to high-quality health care and social services, and safe and affordable housing. Following the World Summit for Children, her

Government had implemented programmes focusing on poverty alleviation and the promotion and protection of children's rights. The Canadian International Development Agency supported programmes in developing countries, spending about $1 million per day on children.

10. The United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had promoted considerable progress in dealing with issues of concern to persons with disabilities in her country. The recent Commonwealth Games in Canada had given new meaning to the concept of equality and integration. It was important for all countries to monitor the implementation of the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. The appointment of the Special Rapporteur for the Standard Rules demonstrated the leadership by the United Nations in that field and should lead to new and creative approaches to dealing with disability issues.

11. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) stressed the need to take stock of what had been achieved and assess what remained to be done in preparing for the World Summit for Social Development. He noted with satisfaction that the draft declaration contained most of the elements for a consolidated text to serve as a basis for negotiation at the next session of the Preparatory Committee.

12. His delegation welcomed the structure of the draft declaration and programme of action, which embodied a people-centred approach to development and a commitment to international cooperation with emphasis on Africa and the least developed countries. To be acceptable to all, however, the draft declaration should refer clearly to the moral duty of all States to give full attention to the social dimension of development; and should also call for the advancement of rural women in developing countries, particularly in Africa, the integration of the activities of the informal sector into a structured economic framework, the mobilization of financial resources, and international cooperation based on partnership. With regard to the draft programme of action, the Secretariat should prepare a detailed cost estimate by January 1995, together with reliable data on the different types of poverty for use by States.

13. Due attention should also be given in the draft programme to institutional matters at all levels. At the international level, for instance, the work of the Commission for Social Development should be revitalized on the basis of the results of the Summit. On the question of resources, implementation of the concept of "20/20" - as discussed in the draft programme of action in document A/CONF.166/PC/L.13, sect. V.E - under which 20 per cent of developing countries' domestic budget and 20 per cent of donor countries' development assistance would be allocated to human development, would greatly increase the resources available for social development.

14. He welcomed the adoption of the subject of poverty as one of the main themes for the World Summit. Measures in favour of the elderly, too, were of vital importance. African countries considered the elderly as a precious component of society. The Summit should also take full account of the needs and contributions of persons with disabilities. Lastly, recalling that 1994 was the

International Year of the Family, he welcomed the activities of the United Nations and related organizations in that celebration.

15. Mr. STOIAN (Romania) noted that, after the end of the cold war, the international community had rediscovered the importance of social development in the context of new socio-political realities. Peace, stability, democracy, human rights, economic development and social progress were closely linked, and must be taken into account in the interest of genuine international cooperation and improvement of the standards of living of all members of society. Each country had to find its own solutions to such problems as poverty and unemployment through well-defined and viable policies in a context of sustainable, people-centred development, that took account of the most vulnerable elements of society. Social development should emphasize social integration through measures in the fields of health, education and training. The World Summit should define a new global social covenant and lay down guidelines for its implementation.

16. The World Summit should give a new impetus to social policy, regardless of each country's level of development. Industrialized nations needed to adapt to new realities; countries with economies in transition had to harmonize social imperatives with the cost of economic reform; and in developing countries, economic growth and the establishment of adequate social conditions were indispensable for reducing poverty. The Summit should study the correlation between social, economic and political dimensions; there could be no sustainable development without peace, nor peace without development.

17. The entire United Nations system should redefine its social development role through its institutions. Closer cooperation between the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions was essential. The International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund should all contribute to both the preparation of the Summit and the implementation of its decisions.

18. The current free-market reforms in Central European States had seriously affected the most vulnerable sections of the population, and had given rise to soaring unemployment. That posed a serious danger to social stability and economic reforms and called for urgent measures. The World Summit should give clear guidance to those countries.

19. Romania considered that the family, as the fundamental social unit, was central to social policy. The celebration of the International Year of the Family had had considerable positive effects, and had led to successful actions in his country. Romania also attached great importance to the integration of young people. The celebration in 1995 of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and of the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year would certainly produce new priorities regarding the place of young people in the world.

20. The elderly, who could make a positive contribution to social development, also deserved particular consideration. The proclamation of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 would serve as a useful reminder of the problems arising from demographic changes such as population ageing. Regarding the disabled, despite some progress in recent years, there were still obstacles to their full and equal participation in social development. His Government's policy was oriented towards the prevention of incapacity and the readaptation and social integration of the disabled. The implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities would tend to eliminate social and physical obstacles to their participation in social and economic life.

21. Mr. BEN AMOR (Tunisia) said that globalization of the many social problems besetting the world constituted a new challenge to the entire international community; only solidarity between developed and developing countries could lead to a solution. He hoped that the United Nations system would provide increased support for new and effective social policies. The World Summit should be seen as a unique opportunity to reaffirm the international community's commitment to people-centred development and international cooperation. Strengthening social integration, alleviating poverty and promoting productive employment constituted the basis of any collective undertaking to that end.

22. Tunisia, which shared other nations' attachment to social advancement, relied on the creative genius, political maturity and sense of responsibility of its men and women to fight against those factors which undermined development. Such reliance had made it possible for his country, despite limited resources, to achieve considerable social progress, with particular focus on the vulnerable members of society.

23. Tunisia was prepared to make its contribution to the construction of an international community united for peace and progress, and was fully aware of the need for solidarity among nations and of the possibilities for complementary action through innovative forms of cooperation such as co-development. There could be no common destiny among peoples without a common approach to planet-wide social problems.

24. Mr. ANSARI (India) said that the Declaration which should emerge from the World Summit should be a forceful statement of current social problems and challenges. It should outline a shared vision for the future, describing clearly the interrelationship between the three core issues - poverty, unemployment and social integration.

25. Greater equality was needed within societies, though not at the expense of natural resources, the conservation of which would ensure equality for future generations. Equality between societies was also necessary, particularly in access to resources and technology. The draft declaration and programme of action prepared for the Summit rightly referred to those needs. They also correctly stated that measures to enhance social development were primarily matters for individual nations. At the international level, what was vital to developing countries was the adoption of measures with respect to trade, foreign

investment, technology flows, debt and official development assistance to enable them to tackle the problems of social development.

26. Social development needed to be placed within the context of constitutionally defined rights, such as the right to equality and freedom of speech, and development-oriented rights such as the right to food and shelter. Both types of rights had been guaranteed or promoted by his Government.

27. Poverty eradication was feasible, and he estimated that by the year 2000 poverty levels in India would have been reduced to 5 per cent of the population, which would probably comprise very vulnerable groups who should be covered by social welfare measures as opposed to development action. His Government aimed for realistic planning based on estimates of individuals' food and non-food requirements and taking account of State provision for minimum needs, while at the same time setting definite targets. India stood for the eradication of poverty and the reduction of the relative inequalities that also existed in society.

28. He regretted that the final documents for the Summit emphasized reallocating resources for official development assistance rather than supplementing them. He called for a comprehensive solution to the problem of external debt, incorporating innovative measures targeting not only those countries which had accrued arrears, but also those which had continued to meet their obligations at considerable cost.

29. Follow-up action should take the form of strengthening existing institutions rather than creating new structures, since effective follow-up depended more on the political will to cooperate than on the structure of interaction. He said that monitoring of the implementation of the programme of action could be done only at the national level, through Governments accountable to the electorate. At the regional and international levels, what was important was the exchange of information. Lastly, he recommended that, in the period leading up to the Summit, work should concentrate on specific commitment and action rather than unproductive redefinition of terminology.

30. Miss AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that her delegation believed that poverty alleviation, productive employment and social integration - the three core issues of the World Summit for Social Development - must be tackled in a radical manner and not merely embodied in a declaration and programme of action that would be difficult to implement. Social development must be placed within an objective framework that took account of the characteristics of each society, and must be linked with economic development, human rights and peace and security. There was also a need to raise the political level at which social questions were discussed at the national and international levels.

31. Her delegation hoped that the declaration and programme of action to be adopted by the Summit would reflect the fundamental issues presented by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77. Their consideration by heads of State and Government would create a unique opportunity to focus the attention of the latter on the principal objectives and strategies involved.

32. Coordination between States and the United Nations concerning the necessary commitments would ensure support for national efforts, particularly in the least developed countries. Such support would help to create economic conditions enabling developing societies to provide the opportunity to all sectors of society to participate in social development, thereby promoting the integration, through participation in production, of marginalized groups that would otherwise constitute a burden on society.

33. The Summit would not solve the core problems merely by adopting a declaration and programme of action. It must be able to generate political momentum and clarify perceptions if it was to stimulate national action and international cooperation through a new commitment to the achievement of a better life for all peoples.

34. Mr. ANDREASSEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they considered the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development to be a milestone in international cooperation on social issues, focusing as it did on the need to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, a fundamental objective of the United Nations, and providing an opportunity to take wide-ranging policy decisions at the highest political level. The Summit would complement the work of the most recent conferences on human rights and on population and development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, and, taken together, they would define the global agenda for social development. The next challenge would be to follow up that work, strengthening the United Nations role in development while avoiding compartmentalization into numerous functional commissions with parallel reporting arrangements.

35. Disabled people constituted the largest disadvantaged minority in the world. The adoption by the General Assembly of the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled People had been an important step towards enabling such people to participate fully in society. The Nordic countries urged all Member States to commit themselves to the implementation of the Standard Rules, both at the international level by helping to fund the Special Rapporteur and the panel of experts and at the national level by elaborating plans of action for the implementation of the Standard Rules in cooperation with organizations for disabled persons. Such national disability plans should include the three themes of equal opportunities, rehabilitation and the prevention of disabilities, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report on Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/49/435). He noted that, while the main responsibility for implementation lay with national and local government, the United Nations system also had an obligation to implement the Standard Rules.

36. There had been a vast increase in the proportion of old people since the beginning of the century. Although it was accurate to speak of elderly people as vulnerable when discussing their care requirements, they were also valuable repositories of knowledge and experience. Social policy should therefore not only attempt to enhance and prolong their lives but also encourage their full participation in society, as happened in the Nordic countries, where the support

and advice given to the elderly enabled them to make their own decisions, even when they were in institutions. Elderly people should have their own homes throughout their lives, and care services and existing institutions should be reorganized to make that possible.

37. The goals of the International Youth Year in 1985 were still valid - to enhance the participation of youth in society and to encourage their contribution to peace and development. Attempting to provide young people with education, employment, a healthy environment and the enjoyment of rights and freedoms would show them that society was willing to listen to them. Increasing the influence of young people over decisions affecting them would help to avoid future social problems, and he suggested that Member States could perhaps send youth representatives to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. It was also important to involve young people in further work on the draft world youth programme of action.

38. The recent increase in drug abuse, including alcohol abuse, had resulted in tremendous suffering both in human terms, through family disruption, and in social terms, through the economic costs of lost manpower, crime and public health expenditure on treatment and rehabilitation. Only effective international cooperation could solve such problems, with the United Nations playing a more active role in the fight against narcotics, in collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme as part of the Decade against Drug Abuse.

39. Lastly he called for innovative approaches to counteract the social disintegration and exclusion which were mainly the result of unequal development and distribution of wealth, poverty, unemployment and the violation of human rights, in order to mobilize people to take part in decisions about their own future.

40. Mr. AL-MARRI (Qatar) said that economic development and social development went hand in hand and complemented each other. While economic development had received greater attention in the past, the international community was beginning to accord increased attention to social questions.

41. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/85, questions relating to youth had been given a prominent place in ongoing United Nations activities for indigenous peoples, human rights, the family and population and in the preparations for the forthcoming conferences on social development and on women. In the final document adopted by the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Ministers had urged the specialized agencies of the United Nations to intensify their efforts to formulate action-oriented programmes for the development of youth and had called for a United Nations world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond to be adopted by the General Assembly on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995.

42. In Qatar, the Youth and Sports Authority established in 1990 had been assigned the tasks of formulating general policy for youth welfare, training

leaders, supervising projects, establishing clubs and awarding prizes. The National Olympic Committee, established in 1979, was the chief sponsor of sporting activities in the country.

43. Qatar provided educational and health services to all free of charge and was endeavouring to expand its adult literacy programmes and to establish special classes for the disabled. As a Muslim society, the country accorded a special place to the family and did everything possible to strengthen it and to increase its cohesion.

44. Mr. BORJAL (Philippines) said that his Government had recently implemented two plans for social reform and national economic recovery to be achieved in consultation with various sectors of society. The plans focused on vulnerable social groups and poor geographical areas, addressing minimum basic needs with the aim of improving the quality of life and expanding the base of the decision-making process.

45. With respect to disabled persons, his Government had enacted legislation making it mandatory for public establishments and transport to provide better access, and more recently legislation to facilitate the integration of people with disabilities into the mainstream of society. That legislation was already having an impact on the disabled in the Philippines, most of whom lived in rural areas. There was growing awareness of the potential and rights of persons with disabilities. His delegation planned to introduce a draft resolution on the implementation of the Standard Rules and of the Long-term Strategy for the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

46. The social plight of children living in especially difficult circumstances - on the streets, in areas of armed conflict, in refugee camps or in regions ravaged by disaster - required urgent action. It was necessary to ensure that they received medical care, food, shelter and education. It was also necessary to formulate a draft convention on issues related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. He welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth (A/49/434) and was heartened by the final draft of the United Nations world youth programme of action.

47. His country, where children constituted 46 per cent of the population, had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had launched a national plan of action for children based on it. One eighth of its human-resource budget was earmarked for education and health care. With respect to the elderly, it adhered to the principles of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity, and its medium-term development plan encouraged their active participation in social development.

48. Mr. GUNASEKERA (Sri Lanka) said that, with the end of the cold war, it was time for the international community to tackle the root causes of conflict: poverty, unemployment and the absence of social cohesion. To that end, a comprehensive, internationally shared vision of development was required. Social instability in one part of the world could have adverse effects on

stability and prosperity elsewhere. Thus all countries stood to gain from development in the poorer countries. He called, therefore, for the pragmatic and broad-minded participation in development of the countries that controlled the world's resources.

49. The world community must take advantage of the opportunity for decisive action provided by the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development. It must do so by moving beyond a "replay" of known positions and the traditional approach of building a consensus around the lowest common denominator. His country would continue to participate in the ongoing negotiations under the able leadership of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

50. His delegation thanked the Secretary-General for his report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/49/434) and looked forward to the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995. Youth issues were intertwined with the issues of social development and peace and security. Young people constituted the majority of the world's population and could be a force for stability and prosperity or a vehicle for instability and violence, depending on how society treated them. His country therefore supported the priority given once again to youth issues and the participation of youth in national and international decision-making processes by the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Similarly, it supported the draft resolution recently submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement to focus attention on youth during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It expected the Commission for Social Development to finalize the world youth programme of action and to submit it through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. It was pleased to note that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had already formulated their own youth programmes to coincide with the launching of the world youth programme in 1995, and that the African region was pursuing efforts to that end.

51. With regard to the United Nations programme on disabled persons, his delegation wished to express its appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts to promote the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. It noted with satisfaction the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for the Standard Rules and hoped that the necessary contributions would be made to support his activities. Implementation of the Rules was of particular concern to countries faced with an unexpected increase in the number of disabled persons.

52. His delegation also wished to thank the Secretary-General for the draft plan of action to implement the Long-Term Strategy to Further Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and was pleased to note that it contained an array of national, regional and global measures drawing on the experience gained during the Decade of Disabled Persons. It hoped that the Committee would be able to reach a consensus decision to recommend adoption of the Long-Term Strategy.

53. Mrs. BANGOURA (Guinea) welcomed the international community's new awareness of social problems and reiterated her Government's support and great expectations for the World Summit for Social Development. Its three core issues - social integration, poverty and employment - were decisive for the internal and external security of nations. Yet, in a context of international upheaval and recession, economic and social inequalities continued to grow both within and among nations, with disastrous social consequences. Any strategy for sustainable development must be based on an integrated approach that addressed the social, economic, cultural, political and environmental aspects of development.

54. Her country shared the views expressed by the Group of 77 and China regarding the declaration and plan of action to be adopted at the World Summit. Furthermore, those documents should call for specific, realistic measures that would encourage an economic and political environment favourable to social development, address the concerns of all regions and encourage the participation of all development actors. National and international strategies were needed. At the national level, Governments should increase budget allocations to the social sector. At the international level, the developed countries should facilitate the transfer of technologies, institute appropriate trade policies and provide training assistance to the least developed countries. As for the question of follow-up to the Summit, the declaration and plan of action should underscore the need for the Bretton Woods institutions to take social costs into consideration in designing their programmes. Lastly, she stressed that it was important for the international community to work together to make the Social Summit a success.

55. Despite its economic problems, her country was striving to improve its people's social conditions. Many associations for young people, women and the elderly had been organized for that purpose. Under its human development programme, significant progress had been made in providing primary health care, basic education and drinking water.

56. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the status and role of cooperatives (A/49/213). Faced with increased unemployment and deepening poverty as a result of structural adjustment programmes, developing countries were becoming more alert to the possibilities offered by cooperative business enterprises. Her Government's efforts had led to the formation of a great number of cooperatives. However, owing to a lack of resources, it was impossible for existing cooperatives to operate normally and equally impossible to create new ones. Assistance from the international community was therefore imperative. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendations with respect to cooperatives, especially the idea of instituting an annual international day of cooperatives, which would help to inform both people and Governments of the possibilities offered by cooperative enterprises.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 1 November 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/49/24 and Add.1, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/213, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/294, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/422-S/1994/1086, A/49/434, 435, 462 and Corr.1 and 506; A/C.3/49/4/Rev.1)

1. Mr. LINDQVIST (Special Rapporteur for the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities) said that the Standard Rules annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/96 had been drawn up in response to a request from the international community of disabled persons for stronger leadership on disability issues from the United Nations. The Rules were essentially a matter of human rights. In every country there were still obstacles preventing persons with disabilities from exercising their rights and freedoms and making it difficult for them to participate fully in the activities of their societies. The Rules, he stressed, gave Member States the responsibility for taking appropriate action to remove such obstacles. Member States were now strongly committed, both politically and morally, to produce concrete, sustainable results.

2. His monitoring activities would be directed, he emphasized, towards support, advice and assistance, not criticism and control. A panel of experts made up of highly qualified persons from all parts of the world had been established to assist him. The Rules had already been translated into all United Nations languages and distributed to the Member States. The next step would be to direct a first letter to Governments asking them what they had done and were planning to do to implement the Rules. As soon as possible, he would also initiate a dialogue with the United Nations regional commissions in order to ascertain their contribution to the effort. The monitoring mechanism would be funded mainly by extrabudgetary resources, and he and the Secretariat would soon be approaching Governments in order to attempt to negotiate decent conditions for the monitoring activities. The Standard Rules set a three-year period for the monitoring exercise. Thus the international community had three years to prove its intention to recognize and enforce the human rights of its disabled citizens. That was a noble goal, and he looked forward to the cooperation of the Member States in achieving it.

3. Ms. ZACHARIAH (Malaysia) said that much remained to be done at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development in order to justify the presence of heads of State and Government at the World Summit. The Summit should give rise to an international social compact encompassing all the core issues and supported by the necessary resources.

4. She thanked the Secretary-General for his report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/49/434). Her Government coordinated and supported youth activities through several ministries and had allocated funds for youth training programmes in various labour-intensive sectors as well as for youth-centred

programmes involving sports and club activities. In most developing countries, young people formed the backbone of society, and optimizing their potential was essential for national development. National experiences with youth-related programmes represented an important source of information for the drafting of the world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development should take the leading role in organizing United Nations activities in that respect, and the Commission for Social Development, in preparing the final draft, should clearly define the role of the Secretariat.

5. Her delegation welcomed the appointment of the Special Rapporteur for the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. It was concerned at the possibility that he might not receive adequate funding and it would bring the matter up with its Government. She urged other delegations, especially those whose countries were at the forefront of the disability issue, to do the same. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/49/435). Her country was anxious to improve the integration of disabled persons and believed that the Standard Rules and the World Programme of Action would be of assistance in that regard.

6. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the status and role of cooperatives (A/49/213), she said that her Government supported his recommendations concerning cooperatives, which played an important role in her country in mobilizing capital, generating employment and increasing productivity. Cooperative movements had minimized, if not eliminated, the role of middlemen in many transactions. Cooperatives were encouraged in the agricultural, manufacturing, transport, housing, banking and credit sectors. Schools had established library, canteen and bookshop cooperatives, and some cooperatives provided scholarships or had banded together to form training institutions and colleges.

7. Mr. OULD ELY (Mauritania) said that, paradoxically, the end of the cold war had brought armed conflict, associated with the re-emergence of racial and religious intolerance, and a deterioration in the living standards of most of the world's population. The principles of reaffirmation of the dignity of the human person and promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, set forth in the Charter, had never been in greater jeopardy. The situation was worst in the developing countries, especially in Africa and among the most vulnerable groups. As heads of households, refugees or migrants, more and more women were living in poverty. Young people, society's hope for the future, faced overwhelming economic and social difficulties, and his country hoped that the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, to be marked in 1995, would be preceded by the adoption of an effective programme of action for youth. It supported the suggestion made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/49/434) with respect to the number of plenary meetings to be devoted to commemorations of the Year and adoption of the world programme of action, as well as his suggestion that an international youth day should be declared in 1995.

8. It was inconceivable for small islands of wealth to continue to exist amidst a sea of poverty. Of course, primary responsibility for a country's development lay with its Government. However, in an interdependent world operating under an economic system that penalized developing countries, the outcome of any national development effort was uncertain. Despite often painful economic reforms, the gap between the rich and the poor countries had widened terribly during the past 30 years. It was necessary for the international community to launch a new partnership between North and South with a view to lightening the debt burden, abolishing arbitrary trade practices and increasing donor countries' official development assistance in conformity with the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product set by the United Nations. The World Summit for Social Development constituted a unique opportunity to determine the obstacles to development and to formulate an effective new strategy for attacking the root causes of poverty. What was needed was a veritable social contract among all the countries of the globe.

9. Miss GHIRGAB (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the flagrant discrepancy between standards of living in and between countries over the past 50 years was a challenge for humanity as a whole to establish the new international economic order based on equity and the redistribution of income and wealth. The starting-point for tackling social problems and achieving social integration and harmony was the basic unit of society, the family.

10. Such vulnerable social groups as the disabled should remain an international priority. She therefore welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. She also welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/49/435), and hoped that the annexed draft plan of action to implement the Long-term Strategy to Further Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons would be supported by the entire international community.

11. The integration of disabled persons into society was a priority of social development policies in her own country. Legislation adopted in the 1980s provided a number of benefits for the disabled. Her country called for higher priority to be given to the disabled by the international community and in particular for more resources to be made available to the Disabled Persons Unit of the United Nations Secretariat.

12. Libyan legislation aimed at the all-round development of society rather than favouring one group above another. On that basis, education had been proclaimed as a human right, elementary education had been made compulsory and emphasis was placed not merely on quantitative development in terms of the number of students, teachers and schools but on improving the quality of education, particularly technical education.

13. Development plans in her country concentrated on the provision of basic services such as housing, health and clean drinking water. Health care was available without charge to all Libyan citizens.

14. The first phase of the project for the creation of the great man-made river had been completed and was aimed at curbing migration to towns, establishing residential areas, reclaiming new lands and drawing water for agriculture and drinking purposes from beneath the desert.

15. Those achievements over the past two decades in the field of social development were now threatened by the unjust sanctions imposed by the United States of America since the 1980s and by the Security Council since 1992, at the instigation of the United States. The sanctions had been gravely detrimental to all sectors of society and to social and economic life. Thus, an entire people had been deprived of the right to development, a right that was protected by many international instruments, such as the Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by the General Assembly in 1986. It was illogical that such sanctions should be imposed by an organ of the United Nations whose Charter was based on respect for human rights.

16. The detrimental effect of the sanctions had been extensively described in United Nations documents. For example, the air blockade had prevented the medical evacuation of about 9,000 patients suffering from medical conditions which could not be treated locally. An attempt to use overland means of transport had resulted in the death of some 350 patients. Consignments of medical supplies, particularly serums and vaccines, had been delayed, resulting in the death of some 350 infants and 150 women solely because of the shortage of drugs. The issuance of approvals by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 748 (1992) concerning Libya for the medical evacuation of emergency cases by air had been delayed or unjustifiably prevented by the intransigence of certain States.

17. Mr. CHUA (Singapore) said that his country attached great importance to the family, which was the very foundation of Singapore's success. The state of the family determined both the moral tone of society and its economic health. Societies in economic decline were plagued by a breakdown of the family, which eroded the work ethic and led to vandalism, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse. Economically vibrant societies had strong family units, where individuals pursued happiness without disregard for the interests of their family or society as a whole.

18. His country was convinced that its continued success depended on preserving the family unit. Accordingly, his Government had designed policies to pursue that objective, providing low-cost public housing and financial assistance to newly married couples and tax rebates to children who supported their parents. Singapore's low divorce and juvenile-delinquency rates showed that those policies were working.

19. In accordance with its policy of helping families help themselves, his Government had enacted legislation under which children were responsible for looking after elderly parents. By making families more self-sufficient, the State could be freed for other tasks which are more urgent and which it was better equipped to handle. In pursuing pro-family policies, Singapore had been careful not to infringe on the rights of individuals. Strong and supportive

family units not only stabilized and strengthened society, but also promoted the rights of the individual more effectively than courts or human rights conventions.

20. Ms. MATENGU (Namibia) said that the United Nations should convene a special plenary meeting, with participation at the highest political level, devoted to questions relating to youth and coinciding as closely as possible with the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. The draft world programme of action for youth and the youth statement of intent should be adopted at that meeting. Namibia also supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the United Nations should designate an international youth day in 1995, and encouraged Governments to include young people among their representatives to mark the fiftieth anniversary. The upcoming World Summit for Social Development should define concrete measures to deal with questions relating to youth in particular.

21. In Namibia, young people constituted nearly three quarters of the population. The legacy of apartheid had an impact on youth in all sectors. The advent of independence and the subsequent demobilization of the armed forces had left many young people with no skills or formal education to help their integration into society. Low levels of literacy and education had aggravated unemployment, estimated at 30 per cent. In order to address the problems of young people, her Government had established the Ministry of Youth and Sports and identified priority areas for activities: employment, skills training, health and the environment. Youth skills-training centres had been established for school drop-outs. A national youth enterprise fund had been set up to promote self-employment by giving young people access to credit. The National Youth Council, with which all Namibian youth organizations were affiliated, acted as an advisory body to the Government.

22. The widespread illiteracy, particularly among women, was a serious impediment to development. The Fourth World Conference on Women should address the special needs of girls. The programme of action to be adopted at that Conference should include provisions concerning scholarships for girls, particularly in technical and vocational subjects; the reintegration of girls into schools when their education had been interrupted by pregnancy or other factors; and facilities that were accessible for girls and young women.

23. Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the World Summit for Social Development should provide an opportunity for considering the structural causes of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration in order to bring about a system of collective security in the social field, creating a favourable economic and social environment. The World Summit must resolutely address the economic challenges facing developing countries, particularly external debt, structural adjustment programmes, fluctuating commodity prices and declining financial flows towards the poorest countries. Specific commitments on the part of bilateral donors, financial institutions, development agencies, Governments and societies as a whole were necessary to ensure the Summit's success.

24. Africa should be given special consideration, in both the draft declaration and the draft programme of action to be adopted at the World Summit. Many

countries, including his own, had inadequate resources to implement social development strategies. The critical economic situation in Africa should be taken into account as one of the foremost concerns of the Organization. African countries required support for their efforts to help themselves become part of the world economy. The next session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit should adopt specific provisions concerning Africa with a view to mobilizing resources. The commitment of African countries to strengthen their national capacities through active participation by beneficiaries was real. That effort, however, must take place within the framework of dynamic international cooperation. Measures involving debt remission for social development and the allocation of 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance should be adopted at the World Summit. The "20/20" concept described in the draft programme of action could also enable some countries to increase resources allocated to the social sector.

25. Developing countries, of course, must decide to reduce military expenditure and reorient national budgets to meet social needs. Lastly, he hoped that the World Summit would mark a new stage in international relations based on solidarity and aimed at improving the human condition.

26. Ms. LEEDS (United States of America) said that the World Summit for Social Development offered an opportunity for developed and developing countries to engage in a non-polarized dialogue on improving the lives of people in all countries. The Summit's core issues coincided with many of her country's domestic policy priorities: creating jobs, fighting poverty and integrating all individuals into society. It was a question of empowering all persons, particularly women, so that they might lead healthier and better lives. Steps that encouraged widespread participation by individuals in governance, the economy and society at large promoted social development and should be emphasized in the Summit documents.

27. Much work remains to be done in preparing for the Summit. All participants - delegates and non-governmental organizations alike - should continue working for its success. Her country was fully committed to ensuring equal opportunity for everyone, including people with disabilities and young and elderly people, to participate fully in and contribute to society. The full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and the leadership role of the United Nations therein, the subject of General Assembly resolution 48/95, was directly relevant to preparations for the World Summit. The United States fully supported the implementation of the Standard Rules for Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities and welcomed the appointment of the Special Rapporteur to that end. Creating an environment where people's abilities could be maximized would improve the quality of individual lives and ultimately enrich society.

28. In preparing for the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year in 1995, there was a need to expand opportunities for young people and nurture their aspirations. Guaranteeing equal access to education, regardless of gender, age or background, was a step in that direction. Countries must strive to protect

children and youth from disease, drugs, pollution, discrimination, violence, war and homelessness in order to ensure that they led happy and healthy lives.

29. There was a need to expand opportunities for elderly persons to continue to contribute to society. Discrimination and negative stereotyping based on age must cease. An effort must also be made to build on the inherent strength of the family structure. Initiatives at all levels were needed to enable families to have access to more and better choices, since the family was the basic unit for forming society's values and bringing up young people.

30. Mr. SLABÝ (Czech Republic) said that his country, by signing or acceding to various international agreements, had proved its commitment to full integration into international political and economic structures. At the World Summit for Social Development it intended to share its own experience of development, while learning from other countries. He said that, judging from that experience, the trend for future developments were, politically, towards pluralist democracy, and, economically, towards a free-market economy. Unlike countries where reform had been accompanied by conflict, in his country there had been political and social consensus, which had created a firm basis for economic reform. The indications were that it was also important to have a precisely targeted social policy. His Government had recently implemented measures to protect the groups most vulnerable to economic change and had thus avoided social tension.

31. His delegation considered that the programme of action for discussion at the World Summit for Social Development should be concise, balanced and concrete - action-oriented and people-oriented. Social policy should guarantee women's rights, integrate the disabled and protect vulnerable social groups. It would be important to address education, particularly specialized training. Flourishing independent civic associations such as trade unions and entrepreneurial organizations were a prerequisite to problem-solving by social consensus at the national level. That in turn would influence friendly relations at the international level. Nevertheless, each country must assume responsibility for its own solutions, taking into account its specific conditions. Lastly, his delegation supported the objectives of the International Year of the Family and had welcomed the recent International Conference on Families. It would like to see the family given a central place at the World Summit and at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

32. Mr. TIN (Myanmar) said that cooperatives were a vital component in the economic development of both developing and developed nations. His Government regarded them as a pillar of the economy and an effective means of boosting socio-economic development, and had therefore taken them into account in its new economic strategy. With a view to achieving sustainable economic development, as of 1988 wide-ranging economic reforms had been introduced in Myanmar based on market-oriented policies. Such measures had resulted, inter alia, in the liberalization of trade and an outward-looking exports-promotion policy as well as the enhanced role of cooperatives in the private sector.

33. Four statutes enacted in recent years, including one governing cooperative societies, had facilitated private enterprise and the creation of some 20,000

cooperatives, thereby helping to boost exports. A cooperative industrial fair held in Yangon in 1993 with the aim of generating employment prospects and enhancing markets for domestic industrial goods had also earned substantial revenue. A "cooperative showcase" had been set up at the Ministry of Cooperatives to promote exports. Cooperatives from Myanmar had also made a valuable contribution to the 1993 World Trade Fair held in Taejon, Republic of Korea, and to the 1993 Myanmar Trade Fair.

34. During the current transition towards a market economy, private-sector cooperatives played a crucial role in the socio-economic development of Myanmar. His delegation therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's report on cooperatives (A/49/213). It hoped that the role of cooperatives would be taken up by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, in the context of sustainable development and international economic cooperation. Since 1995 marked the centenary of the establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance, it was fitting that the General Assembly, in resolution 47/90, had proclaimed the first Saturday of July 1995 to be International Day of Cooperatives. He hoped that it would be observed annually thereafter. With a view to creating greater awareness of the benefits of cooperatives and the aims of the international cooperative movement, that day would be celebrated each year in Myanmar in a fitting manner.

35. Mrs. JUNEJO (Pakistan) said that, despite considerable progress in raising the world's standard of living, much of the world's population still lived in poverty, mainly in Asia and Africa. Any plan for creating a new social order must focus on developing countries' problems. The imbalance between poor and rich countries must be corrected, for social development could not be assured if the majority of the world's population continued to service the wasteful lifestyles of the minority. The eradication of poverty was an international as well as a national responsibility, and a global approach must be adopted, as had already been done in the preservation of peace and security and the promotion of human rights. A delicate balance between market forces and government intervention was needed to stimulate economic growth while ensuring an equitable distribution of wealth.

36. A related aim was to integrate socially vulnerable groups into the mainstream of society. At the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development a new model could emerge, shifting the emphasis from charity and welfare to participation in decision-making.

37. Conflict in many parts of the world had led to social disintegration and massive human suffering. In the interests of social and economic development at the global level, the international community must not forget the victims, once it had addressed the urgent political dimensions of such conflict. Rather, it should ensure that social considerations were an integral part of all programmes for reconciliation and economic recovery. Similarly, the United Nations should play its legitimate role in averting threats to peace and security, in order to accelerate the diversion of resources from defence-oriented security to social security.

38. Her Government had launched a comprehensive social action programme to implement an integrated strategy focusing on education, health, nutrition, welfare and rural water supply and sanitation. It aimed to eradicate poverty, redress gender inequities, develop rural areas and protect the environment. Economic reform in conjunction with privatization had helped in financing social development, and donors at all levels had endorsed and supported the social action programme.

39. The World Summit for Social Development would be an opportunity to reach a consensus on the problems of finance, debt, trade and transfer of technology. Debt relief and cancellation, in particular, could enable developing countries to invest massively in social development programmes and build structures for sustainable development. Her delegation considered that new and additional resources were the most effective tool for breaking the vicious circle of aid, debt and dependency. The concept of "international taxation" deserved serious consideration. Such an independent source of income could provide the United Nations with the means to influence and regulate international economic and social decision-making. She urged the United Nations to end the paralysis brought about by overextended commitments and ever-shrinking resources. There was vast potential in the huge and sprawling machinery of the specialized agencies which could enable the United Nations to take the lead in a new global compact on social development. Such a compact would, however, require resources and commitment from Member States.

40. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that social development and economic progress were interdependent. Similarly, social development was relevant to global security. Threats of a social nature such as AIDS and international drug trafficking were no less destabilizing than previous military threats. A coordinated approach was required, and the United Nations had a special role to play.

41. Thailand was deeply committed to the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development and had been active both in regional preparatory conferences and in formulating new domestic social policies. The goal of development efforts was humanity itself. Thailand was committed to a "society for all" and placed special importance on protecting and promoting the rights of groups which had been marginalized in the past.

42. His Government placed youth, as humanity's most precious resource, high among its development priorities. His delegation supported the convening of special plenary meetings of the General Assembly and the designation of an international youth day in 1995. He hoped that the draft world programme of action for youth and the youth statement of intent would be adopted.

43. The elderly, as a stabilizing force in society, were highly respected in Thailand. His Government had proclaimed a National Elderly Persons Day and had formulated various long-term projects relating to the equality of life and physical and mental welfare of the ageing, and his delegation thanked the United Nations Population Fund for its assistance in that regard.

44. He said that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the World Programme of Action were valuable ways of raising awareness, and his delegation welcomed the adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. His country had signed a regional proclamation on the participation of people with disabilities and domestically had been improving education and training facilities for the disabled.

45. The strengthening of the family was an indispensable component of social order. A unified family was a prerequisite for the balanced development of society as a whole. Without it, society went into decline. His Government had proclaimed a National Family Day and had begun work on various issues such as the role of fathers as partners in the home, the elimination of domestic violence against women and children, and educational projects. His delegation supported the International Year of the Family, which had led to numerous activities in his country.

46. Mr. KARAMBEZI (Rwanda) said that problems of poverty and social disintegration in his country had been exacerbated by a war lasting nearly four years. The final genocidal acts of that conflict had traumatized Rwandan society and shocked the world. In the name of the victims he thanked the international community for its assistance and sympathy. He counted on continuing solidarity to aid Rwanda in its recovery. As the President of Rwanda had pointed out in his speech to the General Assembly, the Rwandan people would have to rebuild the nation with minimal resources.

47. Thus Rwanda placed its hopes in the World Summit for Social Development. Thousands of lives had been shattered, as had the social infrastructure, and those who had previously been involved with social development had been killed or had fled. International aid - moral, political, technical and economic - was vital. His Government would need the international community's support to put in place the various social programmes which would be necessary if Rwandan society was to learn new values based on respect for human rights, social integration and national development.

48. Mrs. KOVALSKA (Ukraine) said that, in view of the world's growing socio-economic problems, the decision to convene the World Summit for Social Development was important and timely. It was particularly appropriate that the Summit should be held in 1995, the year that marked a half century of United Nations activities. She hoped that the situation of countries undergoing social difficulties due to their transition to a market economy would be taken into account in the final documents of the Summit. Ukraine attached great importance to the regional conferences being held in preparation for the Summit and expected that the recent International Conference on Population and Development as well as the forthcoming World Conference on Women would foster international cooperation in the social area and would help in shaping appropriate social policies at national level.

49. The worsening economic recession and the deterioration in social indicators seen in many countries undergoing economic transition was attributable, inter alia, to inappropriate market policies and errors committed during

privatization as well as to the cost of restructuring industry. Clearly, such trends adversely affected the more vulnerable sections of the population. Moreover, given the shortage of resources available for social development, the considerable costs of disarmament and of the programme to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, as well as other factors, the existing services in Ukraine were inadequate.

50. The Government was therefore taking steps to set up a new social services system with the view to protecting above all the most underprivileged sections of the population, including those from broken or large families and orphans. Indeed, Ukraine's demographic situation was one of the worst in Europe, with a rapid fall in the birth rate and a rise in the ageing population. Such a trend would have long-term effects on the country's economic development, labour force and social structure.

51. Regrettably, the Government's efforts had brought little improvement in the deteriorating social conditions caused by the drastic reforms. The only way Ukraine could overcome the current crisis was to adopt a new social, economic and political strategy. The President of Ukraine had recently submitted a radical economic-reform programme to the Ukrainian parliament, which had in general supported it. The programme would redress the situation by encouraging workers to increase their output and become more enterprising, increasing labour and service costs payable by high-income earners so as to ease the burden of social costs on the State budget, and fostering greater employee ownership and profit-sharing.

52. The implementation of the programme would be long and complicated, and the Ukraine would draw heavily on the experience gained by other countries in decentralizing their economies, while bearing in mind that there was no standard solution and thus the particular needs of each country must be taken into account. Furthermore, she stressed the importance of joint research projects undertaken by Ukrainian and international experts on matters of priority such as worker-employer relations during reorganization of industry; employment trends, including hidden unemployment; and ascertaining the real causes of falling living standards with the view to shaping an effective social protection policy.

53. Her country greatly appreciated the activities of the United Nations and its agencies and was counting on their collaboration. In that connection, she underlined the usefulness of the international conference held recently in Kiev on labour-market and social-policy reform in Ukraine, organized by ILO and UNDP in cooperation with the United Nations. She stressed that the improvement of the social conditions of the world's population required that assistance from the United Nations and its specialized agencies should be oriented towards more practical goals.

54. Mr. LEPESHKO (Belarus) said that, notwithstanding the efforts made by the United Nations and the international community over the past half century, the world faced social and economic problems on an unprecedented scale. While the situation was undoubtedly the most serious in the developing countries, where more than 1 billion people lived in extreme poverty, other problems such as

ethnic conflicts, drugs, crime and unemployment affected the developed world too. The scarcity of resources for the United Nations social programmes, political instability and environmental degradation thwarted any improvement in the social area, and for precisely those reasons his delegation welcomed the convening of the Summit for Social Development in 1995 and endorsed the core issues to be addressed by it.

55. Moreover, it hoped that the Summit would foster international cooperation on a social policy that would take national interests and needs into account, and looked forward to the establishment of action-oriented plans and appropriate follow-up mechanisms. The Summit should also enhance the political commitment of Governments, shape national policies for social development as well as improve the efficiency of and create awareness about the United Nations social programmes.

56. With regard to employment, it was worthwhile noting the special role of cooperatives, which had great potential for resolving social problems, as borne out by the Secretary-General's report (A/49/213). The cooperative movement had gained momentum in Belarus during the past few decades, and his delegation supported the General Assembly's decision to proclaim an International Day of Cooperatives. The success of the Summit would to a great extent depend on the work of the Preparatory Committee, and he expressed the hope that the spirit of compromise and cooperation demonstrated during the recent inter-sessional consultations would continue to prevail. The final documents of the Summit should set specific and realistic goals aimed at creating the right political and economic conditions for sustained social development, with due regard for the specific needs of countries in different regions, including those with economies in transition.

57. Many members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, such as Belarus, currently undergoing economic transition also had to cope with fundamental social changes, and the most vulnerable groups were hardest hit. Despite depleted energy resources, declining production and scarcity of funds for social infrastructures, the Government of Belarus was endeavouring to resolve social problems by facilitating self-funding by companies and organizations; by providing regular support to one third of the population, chiefly the most vulnerable groups and unskilled workers; and by raising minimum wages and indexing net incomes.

58. A range of social legislation had also been enacted. Programmes for the disabled and the elderly had recently been introduced to mitigate the social, medical and psychological consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and the continuing recession. Each year the programme on employment and social protection was revised.

59. Despite the economic hardship resulting from economic reforms, the democratization of State institutions and the tolerance of the population ensured Belarus relative political stability. Belarus relied on the assistance of international organizations such as the United Nations for resolving its

social problems, and therefore attached great importance to United Nations programmes for cooperation with countries undergoing economic transition.

60. Social development in Belarus was gravely hampered by the radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl disaster. The increasing incidence of thyroid diseases among children was a matter of great concern. Although efforts were being made to improve the environment and medical treatment available to the population in contaminated areas, the deteriorating health of children in the country required a huge financial outlay for the establishment of special institutions. Assistance from international organizations, charity funds and other States was therefore vital.

61. In conclusion, he pledged his country's commitment to do its utmost to ensure the success of the World Summit for Social Development, which would give new impetus to economic and social development world wide.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
15th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 1 November 1994
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/49/24 and Add.1, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/213, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/294, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/422-S/1994/1086, A/49/434, 435, 462 and Corr.1 and 506; A/C.3/49/4/Rev.1)

1. Mr. AL-ZADGALY (Oman) said that man was the prime mover and the target of development. Human activity was the very essence of the development of States and it was therefore essential to promote the development of human resources and take full advantage of them. Oman was therefore extremely interested in the World Summit for Social Development to be held in Copenhagen in 1995, as it would allow the international community to examine in depth problems relating to social progress.

2. Oman followed a policy of protecting the elderly based on the teachings of Arab Muslim traditions, a main objective of which was social assistance in which older persons were cared for and respected; every human being was entitled to a dignified life, irrespective of his state of health. The State offered social protection for its citizens throughout their lifetime through its institutions, which took care of their material needs and provided benefits such as retirement at age 60 and a social security system under which the fruits of development were distributed among the population.

3. Concern for the human being was such in Oman that the disabled were not neglected, since they were part of the human resources of any society. In Oman there was a policy of training and care as well as equal opportunities for the disabled so as to ensure their participation in society. To that end, training courses were provided and efforts made to create awareness about the disabled among the public at large by all means available. Labour legislation guaranteed employment for the disabled in the civil service; they were also assisted in setting up various commercial projects. The aim was to achieve their participation in all social, cultural and sports activities for the disabled at national and international levels.

4. Oman was doing its utmost for the development of human resources and to ensure that young people played a part in the establishment of a new world order. It had devised training policies, programmes and projects for youth so that they could serve their country and the international community, based on the principles of the United Nations. Youth centres had been set up and all the necessary resources allocated with the aim of ensuring that young people could contribute to all regional and international activities.

5. Mrs. MSUYA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the glaring disparities between the developed, rich and powerful countries and those which were underdeveloped, poor and had the least power formed the North-South divide and explained the different approaches to the problem of development. The proposed

"agenda for development" would have an important role to play in dealing with the consequences of that divide. In the view of her delegation, social development must be considered in the context of the agenda for development. In that connection, it commended the report by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, issued following the Committee's second session, which laid down a plan of action aimed at redressing the imbalance between the rich and the poor.

6. Despite overall economic growth, progress had been marred by deteriorating social conditions, especially in Africa and the least developed countries. The Declaration on Social Progress and Development, adopted 25 years previously, provided clear guidelines for the integration of economic and social action aimed at improving the social environment. In an increasingly interdependent world, international partnership and cooperation were required so that States could ensure the social progress and well-being of their citizens.

7. The Summit would take up three basic issues: the eradication of poverty, enhancement of productive employment and social integration, which were particularly relevant in the current environment, since they concerned above all the disadvantaged groups in society, namely youth, the elderly and the disabled. Africa and the least developed countries could not resolve all their social problems alone: the international community and in particular the developed North must provide their support and cooperation. The draft declaration and draft programme of action would serve as a basis for elaborating appropriate national strategies and outline measures to be taken by the development partners. That was important for ensuring progress in debt cancellation, improving terms of trade, increasing investments, encouraging South-South cooperation and mobilizing additional resources for social development.

8. Mr. KHRYSKOV (Russian Federation) welcomed United Nations efforts in recent years to define a suitable role for the Organization in resolving social development problems in the short and long term, and identifying obstacles to such development as well as ways and means of overcoming them. The Organization's activities concerning humanitarian and social cooperation should be in keeping with its efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and to guarantee peace and development.

9. In the social sphere his country had had to pay a high price for the radical constitutional, political and economic changes introduced, particularly with regard to employment, social security, housing and medical care. The President and the Government of the Russian Federation had taken a series of steps to overcome the social consequences of such reforms. Basic legislation was being amended and social protection measures targeted at sections of the population requiring special assistance were being carried out in conformity with international standards and would undoubtedly contribute to the success of the democratic reforms.

10. Social instability, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and intolerance carried within them the seeds of armed conflict and civil war. It was therefore essential to find a solution which would take due account of the function of

political institutions in social development, the close link between the solution to social problems and the guaranteeing of human rights, and the effectiveness of democratic institutions. The World Summit for Social Development would be particularly important from that perspective, since it should make tangible progress in preventing an increase in social instability in many parts of the world, including countries with economies in transition. His delegation welcomed the work done to date by the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit and hoped that the draft declaration and programme of action would refer to the social aspects of the difficult period of economic change. The President of the Russian Federation had set up a national preparatory committee, under the chairmanship of the Vice-President, and had announced that he would personally attend the Summit.

11. The success of democratic reforms in the countries with economies in transition correlated directly with the solution of social problems. It was essential for the international community to provide effective support in order to ensure that economic change in those countries succeeded and that all social groups adjusted to the new situation. The United Nations should continue to implement programmes relating to the family even after the end of the International Year of the Family. The results of the recent Conference on Families were a valuable basis for further measures in that regard. The family was of enduring importance, for the life and development of the human being and also in society, in the raising of new generations and in the attainment of social stability and progress. He recalled his delegation's suggestion that 1995-2004 be proclaimed the decade of the family and that a programme of activities should be worked out focusing on the family's role in social progress - one of its major agents and one of its major targets.

12. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's policy of emphasizing the social aspect of international cooperation under the leadership of the United Nations and of assigning priority to social issues in the Organization's own activities. In that regard the restructuring of the Secretariat units with responsibility for social questions was necessary and justifiable. However, before proceeding further, it might be useful to analyse the results of the first stage of reorganization. He hoped that restructuring would enable the Secretariat staff to realize the aims of the United Nations more effectively and to produce documentation on social, political, economic, legal and other issues more efficiently. That would require improvement of the Organization's internal coordination. It might also be useful to draw up a general plan of United Nations activities which would cover the whole range of questions relating to social development at the three levels - national, regional and international.

13. He noted the increase in the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe in support of States with economies in transition. The regional system of cooperation for solving social problems had great potential and should be exploited to the full. It would be reasonable to call all the regional commissions "economic and social".

14. The Russian Federation was prepared to participate in any form of mutually beneficial cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international level in

order to solve social problems and would support suggestions that the international community should engage in effective and constructive activities to that end.

15. Mr. KIM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) reviewed the United Nations international instruments on social issues. The situation in that field remained serious and that posed a threat to the survival of humankind. The economic crisis, racial and ethnic conflicts, external debt, lack of commitment to investment, protectionism, massive flows of refugees and displaced persons and natural disasters had exacerbated the economic situation and hampered social development, particularly in the developing countries. The international community should take decisive action to eradicate poverty, expand productive employment and enhance social integration. His delegation therefore attached the utmost importance to the World Summit for Social Development and would do all in its power to make the Summit a milestone in international cooperation to achieve social development and create a new and peaceful world free from all forms of inequality.

16. The programme of action to be adopted at the Summit should include action-oriented initiatives at the international level, with a firm political commitment to the allocation of resources. That could make a substantial contribution to social development all over the world. He paid tribute to the work of the Preparatory Committee and in particular the Danish Government's excellent preparations for the success of the Summit.

17. His Government had taken various measures with regard to social welfare, including legislation on labour and on the family. It had also instituted universal compulsory 11-year education, free medical care, guaranteed work for all according to their needs and hope. Special care for persons with disabilities had also been provided, such as schools, vocational schools, factories, rest centres and sanatoria. It had also paid special attention to youth training and had proclaimed 28 August as "Youth Day". The Korean people would continue to defend man-centred socialism and was ready to contribute to the success of social development world wide.

18. Ms. TOMIČ (Slovenia) stressed the need to address efficiently the three core issues of the World Summit on Social Development - the eradication of poverty, the creation of productive employment, and the enhancement of social integration. That could be done through reliable, realistic and long-term policy recommendations which should target specific groups and include appropriate means of implementation and monitoring. Socio-economic development should be human-centred, given the problems of social disintegration and individual isolation. Emphasis should be placed on empowerment, participation and inclusion within society. Social development policy should therefore embody fundamental ethical principles, which found their universal legal expression in the human rights Covenants. Slovenia had recently hosted a United Nations Seminar on Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of Social Progress. Her delegation could provide information on its results in time for the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, in January 1995.

19. With regard to social development, after two years of difficulty resulting from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia had achieved macroeconomic stability and sustained growth through programmes of socio-economic adjustment, privatization of public enterprises and the emergence of a large and relatively strong private sector. In the legislative process, continued efforts had been made to establish an appropriate and far-reaching safety net to mitigate the shocks of structural change and unemployment and care for those in most need. The Law on Social Security had been passed in 1992 and a minimum level of social security was guaranteed for all by the Constitution.

20. The protection of the least advantaged and the granting of equality of opportunity to all were central to any social policy claiming to be just and compatible with human rights obligations. Following the structural changes that had occurred in Slovene society, employment policies had focused on youth unemployment in order to avoid marginalization of young people and enable their productive integration into society. Unemployment benefits and training assistance continued for a maximum of three years. Employment programmes were promoting self-employment and employment in small and medium-size companies, and ensuring that young people in rural areas had access to training. As a result of such policies, the unemployment rate had decreased by two percentage points for the first time in several years. As for the adaptation of the retirement system to the new requirements of an ageing population, due attention would be given to social benefits for the old, such as pensions, housing and retirement homes.

21. She hoped that the General Assembly, during its fiftieth session, would strengthen youth policies and endorse the United Nations world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond. Slovenia had, in cooperation with youth organizations, formulated its national policy and programme to improve the situation of its young people, and hoped that youth-related concerns would be adequately incorporated into the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

22. She welcomed the adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities at the previous session of the General Assembly, and the designation of a Special Rapporteur for those Rules. Her delegation was confident that the Rules would help to guide national policies towards ensuring full respect of the human rights of disabled persons. A meaningful and coherent development policy called for global cooperation and coordination; the entire United Nations system had to work in an integrated manner.

23. Mr. ALI (Iraq) recalled that social development was directly related to the human being, as the centre of society and State. Progress could be achieved only if countries paid due attention to all aspects of social development. In developing countries, social progress was slow and could even lose ground. If the recession continued, the differences between the societies in the industrialized countries and those of the poorest countries would increase.

24. Progress had been made in Iraq regarding the provision of services, especially to the most needy sectors: free access for young people to education and science, integration of the disabled, housing, and remuneration and health cover for elderly people in need. Such progress had, however, been hindered by the sanctions imposed four years previously.

25. He welcomed the holding of the World Summit for Social Development; his delegation believed that human rights-related social problems affected social development. The achievement of democracy and respect for human rights were linked with the achievement of economic development and with the fulfilment of the obligations which devolved upon developed countries in the context of the universal nature of social development. In that respect, he emphasized the situation in countries subjected to embargoes or economic sanctions, where all social development achievements had been impaired and the situation was one of total regression. Initially, Iraq's public service infrastructure had been destroyed by the allied forces' indiscriminate bombardments, and later, the imposition of sanctions had led to the collapse of all means of support for civil bodies providing services such as medical care, water purification, transport, fuel and food supply, and industrial support.

26. The World Summit for Social Development should give due attention to questions of social development in countries subjected to sanctions, depriving them of basic needs and constituting a source of social misery. Social development should not be obstructed by politically motivated sanctions. The international community should establish a mechanism to alleviate the sufferings of society and the repercussions of sanctions, which reduced the capacity for social progress and stability, essential elements of world peace and security.

27. Ms. DLAMINI (Swaziland) said there should be an understanding among the international community, developed countries, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and donor agencies as to what social development entailed. Otherwise, developing countries would still be faced with external pressures to pursue economic policies which marginalized social development programmes. Structural adjustment programmes should acknowledge the fact that the human being was the centre of development; they should be applied without compromising the right of peoples to social progress.

28. People with disabilities accounted for about 10 per cent of the total population of Swaziland, and those without income received financial assistance from the Government. The Vocational Rehabilitation Centre provided training in such subjects as commerce, electricity, carpentry, sewing and leather-craft, and had a farm for training in agricultural work. A placement officer helped the Centre's students to find employment. The Government had prepared draft legislation on the training and employment of people with disabilities, considered the establishment of a revolving loan scheme for the disabled, and had carried out a study of the work of the Centre.

29. The Government was providing financial assistance to destitute elderly persons; they were given building materials and the help of voluntary organizations to rebuild damaged dwellings. It had also organized a radio

campaign to inculcate respect and consideration for the elderly. Veterans of the Second World War who had sustained incapacitating injuries received financial assistance in proportion to the extent of the injury, and the Government was currently considering extending that cover to all war veterans.

30. Concern was felt in Swaziland regarding the rising trend of youth unemployment, which had forced some young people to resort to crime and other anti-social activities. The Government had elaborated a national youth policy with the assistance of the Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre. While the policy was awaiting final approval, the Government was giving annual grants to the various youth organizations through the Swaziland National Youth Council, but the amounts awarded were generally small. The private sector was usually reluctant to provide assistance; that problem was compounded by the fact that Swaziland had a small industrial sector.

31. Swaziland was grateful for the work done by non-governmental organizations and voluntary and religious organizations in providing relief services to the disadvantaged, with flexibility and swiftness that could not be equalled by the Government. For that reason, the Government was considering channelling a significant proportion of the amount meant for social development through the non-governmental organizations. A draft national policy on non-governmental organizations had been completed and the organizations themselves had accepted it; the document was awaiting final Cabinet approval.

32. Mrs. des ILES (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that were Member States of the United Nations, said that, in convening the World Summit for Social Development, the international community had embarked on a journey towards a more just and more prosperous world. The Caribbean Community had not escaped the crisis that was being endured by the least developed, developing and even middle income countries which were labouring under the weight of structural adjustment programmes and high external debt service payments, high rates of unemployment, particularly among young people, growing urban and rural poverty and increasing crime. The member States of CARICOM therefore had a high stake in the success of the World Summit and, individually and collectively, were actively engaged in the preparatory process, with the assistance, at the regional level, of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). She urged that sufficient resources be provided to ECLAC to enable it to contribute to the elaboration of concrete programmes in the area of social development.

33. The role of the family in promoting the well-being of its members was indispensable. The countries of the Caribbean Community were striving to grapple with changing family structures and social mores and the debilitating effects of those changes. Poverty and unemployment had exacerbated changes in the traditional family structure; in the Caribbean subregion, there was a surge in single-parent families, mainly headed by women; parents held multiple jobs and had little time for their children, and there was growing alienation and despair among children and youth. It was therefore essential for all sectors of society and the international community to take action to provide the basic support structure needed to strengthen the role of the family unit.

34. Youth-related activities within the United Nations system had been woefully inadequate. However, a supportive role was being played by the United Nations Youth Fund through the provision of limited grants for projects geared towards the implementation of the Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth. It was also encouraging that a draft world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond was being elaborated, and would be adopted at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

35. At the national level, enhanced cooperation was needed between government entities responsible for youth issues and young people so that they would be active participants in the development process. The CARICOM States were in favour of including in the world programme of action for youth the recommendation regarding the promotion of intergenerational programmes, since such programmes represented a positive way in which the talents, knowledge and experience of the elderly could be fully utilized in a collective effort to train young people and instil in them the values necessary for healthy, responsible and productive living. At the same time, States had to provide outlets for the creative energies and capabilities of the elderly, who should be beneficiaries of and active participants in the formulation and implementation of national programmes designed to meet their needs and aspirations.

36. With regard to disability issues, the member States of CARICOM believed that the draft plan of action to implement the Long-Term Strategy to Further Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond presented realistic measures to overcome the environmental obstacles and discriminatory patterns of behaviour which impeded the full participation of the disabled in the life of society. The draft plan of action provided important suggestions, some of which could be usefully integrated into the programme of action of the World Summit for Social Development.

37. The multi-sectoral nature of the issues to be addressed at the World Summit underscored the extent to which the outcome of the meeting could affect the lives of peoples the world over. The declaration and programme of action must therefore constitute more than an expression of goodwill on the part of world leaders. There must be an unequivocal demonstration of political will to address the various ills afflicting societies through the adoption of action-oriented measures, the establishment of effective mechanisms and the allocation of adequate resources to implement the commitments to be undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development. The member States of CARICOM believed that a fresh assessment of the role and functions of the Commission for Social Development needed to be undertaken and that its mandate and structure should be revised so as to transform it into an intergovernmental body since the efforts of the international community would come to nought if the follow-up mechanisms were inadequate.

38. Mr. AL-SAEED (Kuwait) said that in Kuwait social development was a matter of priority both at the level of general policy and in national plans and programmes. Citizens enjoyed all types of services at all stages of life. Those services, which included advice and material assistance, were provided

through social welfare ministries and bodies, and were not only offered at the national level, but also extended to friendly and fraternal States. Social development was a matter which concerned the entire international community; it was not limited to one country or group of countries, since man was at the heart of development and was its ultimate objective. Kuwait therefore attached great importance to social development and placed great hopes in the results of the World Summit; its participation in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee demonstrated that concern. The Fourth World Conference on Women was also important, since that type of conference reflected the growing interest of the international community in the various aspects of social questions.

39. The same importance should be attached to care for the elderly as to care for youth so that the elderly could participate fully in the life of society and in its productive activities. In Kuwait, special homes and associations had been established for elderly persons, and the result had been an increase in life expectancy, which was 72 years for men and 76 years for women; that made Kuwait comparable with the most advanced countries. Because of the investment that had been made in youth, young people were supporting the reconstruction of Kuwait, after its structure had been totally destroyed by the Iraqi invasion.

40. Kuwait was one of the countries which was in the forefront of social welfare for disabled persons; it believed that rehabilitation was extremely important so that disabled persons could be integrated in society and participate in achieving the objectives of development. Disabilities derived not only from genetic causes but also from brutal acts carried out by man. That was demonstrated by the large number of people in Kuwait who had been disabled as a result of the aggression unleashed against innocent persons, who had been subjected to torture and acts of violence. The international community should not only provide assistance to disabled persons but also struggle against dictatorial regimes which perpetrated the acts of aggression that caused those disabilities.

41. Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakhstan) said that social problems, which related to various aspects of the life of society, occupied an increasingly important place in the activities of the United Nations. In that context, she supported the idea put forward by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization (A/49/1) that "healthy social conditions strengthen the social fabric, reinforcing peace and development". The most vulnerable sectors of society, particularly the elderly, the disabled, women and children, were the sectors that were being hardest hit by the aggravation of social ills such as crime, drug addiction, poverty and unemployment. The World Summit for Social Development therefore represented a unique opportunity for the international community to develop new approaches and define effective forms of international cooperation for social development. It was to be hoped that as a result of the World Summit, substantive policies would be formulated to resolve the major problems in that area.

42. A national preparatory committee for the World Summit had been set up in Kazakhstan to coordinate all measures for maintaining social stability. She would like to see the declaration and the programme of action take more account

of the suggestions put forward by the Ukrainian delegation on behalf of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan, reflecting the interests of countries with economies in transition.

43. Kazakhstan, being in a period of transition, was facing serious difficulties such as declining production, rising inflation and shrinking national income. Owing to the imbalance between labour supply and demand, unemployment was rising and there were currently around 50,000 unemployed. The standard of living for the least well off in particular had deteriorated, and according to official figures there were around 3 million pensioners including over 340,000 disabled people. Young people were also in a difficult position. The Government was taking steps to overcome the economic crisis and create a legal and structural framework for socio-economic reform. Social welfare measures included modifying the law relating to retirement, increasing State aid to the disabled and establishing benefit funds for the poorest.

44. The international community was unanimous on the family's fundamental role in society; she emphasized its importance as a basic social unit which ensured the survival of societies and the well-being of their members. Kazakhstan too accorded high priority to issues relating to the family. A National Council had been established with the task of preparing for the International Year of the Family. It included representatives of the scientific, cultural and business communities which, together with the Government, were developing a policy on the family. There had also been various events around the country to mark the Year of the Family. Lastly, she hoped that 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the World Summit for Social Development, would be a new milestone in the history of the international community and would reinforce cooperation in a field of great importance for the activities of the United Nations.

45. Mr. BORDA (Colombia) agreed with the representative of Brazil, who had stated the Rio Group's position regarding the World Summit for Social Development. The Colombian President had already explained why it was necessary to initiate a new world system based on solidarity, respect for the self-determination of peoples and the quest for a better standard of living for all. Several factors militated against that objective: neo-protectionism, which threatened free trade, and especially non-tariff protectionism; impoverishment, exacerbated by the social costs of economic liberalization; unemployment, postponement of social investment programmes and neglect of the rural sector. Of similarly detrimental effect were the formation of trading blocs, which went against the idea of a world based on democratic rules of free trade for all on equal terms; and the selective appropriation of production factors, which placed developing countries in the impossible situation of competing on equal terms with the most industrialized countries in the world without having either possession of or fair access to sufficient factors of production.

46. While international cooperation and solidarity were without doubt fundamental to social development, the Colombian Government was modifying its policies to deal with the disadvantaged position of some sectors of the

population. It had therefore initiated specific projects, the principal and most ambitious of them being the establishment of the Social Solidarity Network, consisting of a set of programmes to be carried out through a variety of national institutions within the framework of a plan of direct social action. The aim was to improve living standards for the 33 per cent of Colombians for whom the economic advances had not yet been translated into higher levels of well-being.

47. The aim of the Social Solidarity Network was to complement existing education, health, social training and housing programmes. It was designed to improve particularly vulnerable groups' income and standard of living. It would thus focus on employment, food assistance, support for female heads of household with children of school age, help for the elderly poor, housing, recreation and the encouragement of sporting and artistic talent. It was based on a creative and efficient model of financing. The Government would reallocate internal resources from the national budget, and also receive amounts from local authorities and from multilateral credit agencies. For 1995, resource allocations would be the equivalent of 0.8 per cent of the gross domestic product, and from 1996 onwards that figure would remain around 0.9 per cent, representing a significant increase in national spending on social investment programmes. The basic objective of the Network was the elimination of poverty, on which development is predicated. It was also aiming at global social development objectives such as promotion of the worth and dignity of the human person and improvement of the standard of living of all human beings.

48. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that the issues being dealt with were important because they were closely linked with the programme of the World Summit for Social Development. He repeated his delegation's special interest in the preparatory work for the Summit, which aimed to develop a final declaration and programme of action acceptable to all participants and reflecting the international community's concerns in the field of social development. In order to do this it was necessary to take account of each society's idiosyncrasies and of different cultures and religions.

49. He wished to emphasize certain aspects of the issue. Firstly, the State played a primary role in the development process, which required support from cooperative action at the international level, since social development could not be achieved solely through the market economy. Secondly, the main difficulty for the majority of States, in particular the less developed and developing countries, was the lack of resources for development. It was therefore crucial to reach an agreement at the Summit for Social Development so that programmes and plans could be laid, and to make commitments to provide the resources necessary to finance them. Thirdly, social development could be achieved through the coordination of the work of Governments, United Nations organizations and specialized bodies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Fourthly, it was necessary to establish follow-up mechanisms for the implementation of the recommendations formulated at the Summit for Social Development. Fifthly, it was necessary to include in the draft programme of action preliminary estimates on the implementation of the plans and programmes. It was also essential to reaffirm international commitments in

order to be able to finalize appropriate development plans. Lastly, it was important not to become fixated on concepts, but to reach agreement on effective ways of relieving suffering, reducing poverty and dealing with the basic causes of destructive unemployment.

50. It was particularly important to implement the programmes for the disabled and the elderly. He therefore endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/49/435), which was designed to ensure that the disabled participated effectively in all the activities of society. In the same way he was very interested in questions relating to youth. Youth programmes existed in Egypt, coordinated at national level by the Council for Youth and Sport. He was pleased that the draft programme of action to be adopted at the Summit for Social Development would focus on the problems of youth. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/49/434), he repeated that it was important to ensure the coordination of youth policies and programmes so that young people could overcome the problems they had to face. Egypt wished to take an active part in the Summit for Social Development and to work for development in order to create a new and equitable social order based on respect for human rights and aimed at improving the quality of life for all. Furthermore, he hoped that the new social order would pay the required attention to the problems of Africa and the less developed and developing countries, since the people of those States were suffering great hardship.

51. Mr. REZVANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the efforts undertaken to achieve development, there were numerous unresolved issues concerning population growth, poverty, inequality, patterns of consumption and threats to the environment. All those issues were closely interdependent. To attain sustainable and stable development, the international community should attempt to promote the quality of life for today's generation without damaging the chances of survival of future generations. The persistence of socio-economic inequalities and disparity among nations negated efforts to better the lives of millions of people. All projects for change must be formulated to extend social justice and reduce inequalities in the distribution of resources.

52. The current problems of the young were on the rise in many countries. Depression due to feelings of isolation and alienation drove many young people to narcotics and aggressive sexual behaviour. In recent years, increasing numbers of violent crimes committed by the world's young people had been recorded. That might to some extent be explained by the easy access to deadly weapons in some countries. The international community should start the process of change by investing heavily in the future of the current generation of young people, which was the most vulnerable element of the population. Young people had strayed from their cultural and religious roots, and lost their identity. The high numbers of young people living in the world's communities made it necessary to create new jobs to help them escape from the cycle of poverty and unemployment. It was necessary to invest in training and education; society's progress was directly related to its ability to capitalize on its human

resources and produce technical experts. Such elements were necessary to the wealth and stability of States. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year in 1995 would provide an opportunity to evaluate the issues of the world's youth and to formulate plans to encourage development, cooperation and harmony in that area.

53. Regarding the elderly, one of the major reasons for establishing social institutions was to ensure that their needs were met and that they were properly taken care of. It was essential to ensure their financial independence in order that they should feel self-sufficient and confident, but it should be done without isolating them from their families and social connections. Instead of being marginalized, the elderly should be looked upon as a valuable resource for every State. Another sector of the population requiring special attention was the disabled, who should be allowed to benefit from the progress achieved in rehabilitation and health. It was important to train experts to provide the necessary services; cooperation among international health institutions was also required, to enable the exchange of scientific information and know-how. Such activities should also take into account the cultural characteristics of each society.

54. Although the latest round of informal consultations for the World Summit for Social Development had been successful, the intergovernmental negotiations on the exact wording of the draft declaration and draft programme of action had not yet begun. Given the diversity of views expressed on the subject, the Preparatory Committee could not afford to delay the negotiations.

55. Mrs. OLSZOWSKI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) recalled, in the context of the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, that UNESCO, through its scientific mandate, could contribute significantly to the follow-up to the Summit by providing technical cooperation and policy advice to member States and international organizations. It was necessary to tackle the causes and manifestations of social exclusion, in particular that based on cultural or ethnic diversity, migrations and other phenomena leading to various forms of discrimination; that could be done by means of strategies based on policy-relevant research. The UNESCO programme Management of Social Transformations was the first international social-science programme. All information on that programme could be obtained from the UNESCO secretariat in Paris through its New York liaison office.

56. A clarification of the cultural rights of persons belonging to minority groups could, with the help of UNESCO for the creation of normative instruments, facilitate the promotion and social integration of such groups. UNESCO's ongoing work on education for human rights could offer member States guidance on developing strategies and actions to promote the participation of civil society in public decision-making. UNESCO's experience was needed in endogenous capacity-building, education and training policies, strategies for human resource development, and for transfer and sharing of knowledge. Another example of the contribution of UNESCO to the follow-up to the Summit was the promotion of access to communication, which encouraged the social integration of

marginalized groups, particularly girls and women, through education and specific youth programmes. Social integration also meant access by the poorest sectors of society to the benefits of science and technology, an area in which UNESCO could play an important part.

57. On a regional level, various endeavours had been undertaken with a view to attaining some of the above goals. One example was a conference to be held in Italy, in cooperation with the University of Bologna, on the struggle against poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, and public policies, popular action and social development. In preparing for that conference, studies had been conducted on the current social crisis, with emphasis on cooperation between the State, enterprises and civil society, and the integration of social policies into a comprehensive set of public policies designed to foster sustainable development. UNESCO was convening, in December 1994, a national seminar in New Delhi, India, on science and technology for social development, in collaboration with the Indian National Institute of Science, Technology, and Development Studies. The purpose of the seminar was to identify the science and technology priorities for employment-oriented development strategies.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.